

# Will banning junk food from schools help kids' health?

Just because it isn't around doesn't mean that they'll eat healthily



DAVID  
JOHNSTON

point

On Tuesday, the Edmonton Public School Board finally made the long-debated decision to eliminate the sale of junk food from their schools. It seems to me that this decision is not only heavy-handed and manipulative, but just plain pointless as well.

I'm not trying to argue if the average K-12 student's consumption of junk food is abnormal or contested. I think the real point here is that it's ultimately not the Edmonton Public School Board's place to step in and designate themselves the gatekeepers through which all nutritional decisions should be made. Merely eliminating junk food is the brute-force solution, akin to knocking down a wall by dropping a nuke. There's no guarantee that it'll work, and even if it does, it'll ultimately do more harm than good.

Trustee Dave Colburn's openly ambivalent definition of "junk food" (any food high in fat, sugar, or salt and low in nutritive value), is far too vague to be effective. Depending on your definitions of "high," "fat," "sugar," "low," and "nutritive value," that statement could describe virtually any food an overzealous trustee wants. Except celery;

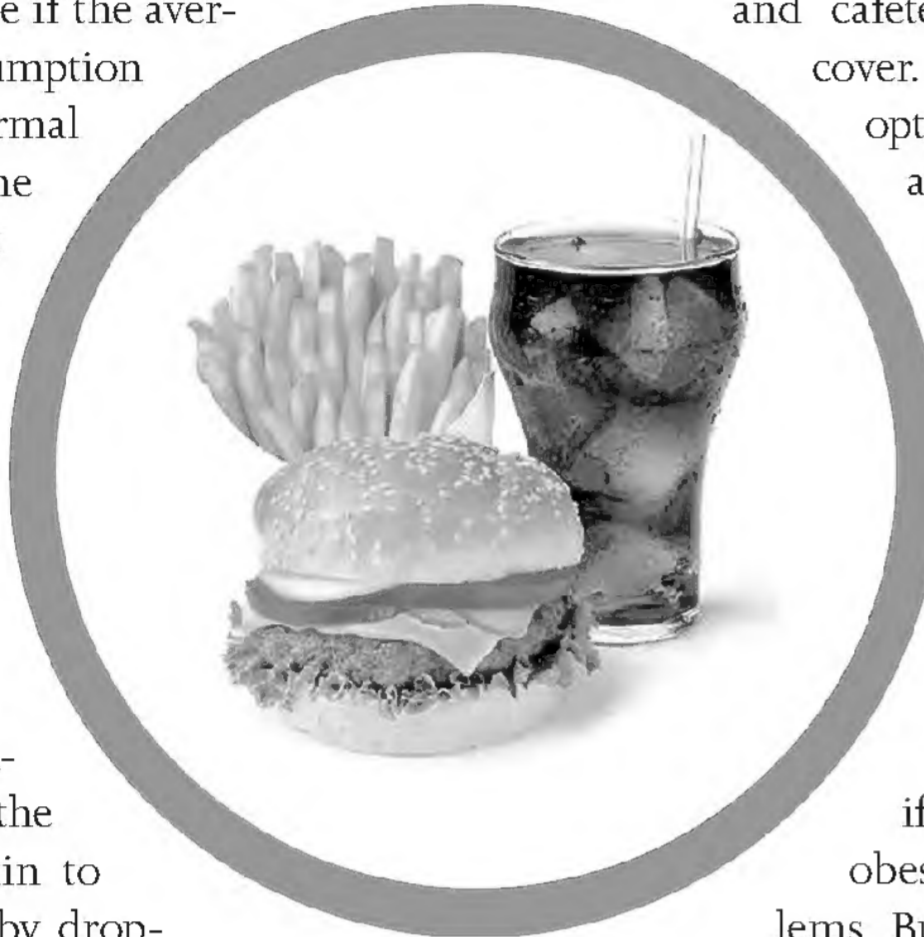
no one can say anything bad about celery.

It's not up to the schools to police the eating habits of the kids—that's a job for the parents, for the nutritionists, and for the kids themselves. If little Billy wants to gorge himself on Twix and Pepsi for two weeks, let him. He'll experience the side-effects soon enough, and will want to change his diet. Or not, in which case little Billy won't be that little much longer, and ultimately, that's nothing the EPSB can control.

If he wants his Twix fix, he'll walk a block to a gas station at lunch and buy them. Or he'll get it after school, sneak it in from home, or get the fat into his body in any one of a dozen ways that

a slimming-down of the vending machines and cafeteria menus simply can't cover. Give him the facts, the option to change his diet, and the pros and cons of all paths. Letting him know all the options is the only way he'll ever make the conscious (and EPSB-desired) decision to improve his dietary health.

I don't know if this blanket-ban plan will work, and I don't know if it'll help control child obesity or dietary problems. But I do know that it's the wrong way to deal with the issue, and the underlying issues won't be solved by this ill-conceived plan to cut the fat. Change their education, change their attitudes, and introduce more nutritive choices. Pick a solution that's not an attempt to create an artificially sugar-free environment that, even if successful, will do nothing to help the kids once they're beyond the reach of the relatively short arm of the Edmonton Public School Board.



Kids will pick taste over health, so we need to limit the temptation



CONAL  
PIERSE

counterpoint

The Edmonton Public School Board is completely justified in outlawing sugary junk in order to promote a healthier environment for young children. Obesity is a major problem among today's youth, and to claim that such a move wouldn't be helpful is naïve.

This is not a matter of the School Board attempting to do parents' jobs for them; rather, they are simply nipping a known problem in the bud. Despite parents' best efforts to teach their children good nutrition, the fact still remains that these kids are, well, kids. And kids, as a rule, aren't generally known for doing what's best for them—look for the crying child with their tongue stuck to a piece of playground equipment, and you'll see my point.

There's only so much mom and dad can do at home to prevent their child's arteries from clogging up like a gas station toilet. Even by packing healthier lunches, a parent can't ensure that their child will only eat what has been given to them, as your lunch is more a gathering of bartering chips than a set deal. You just have to

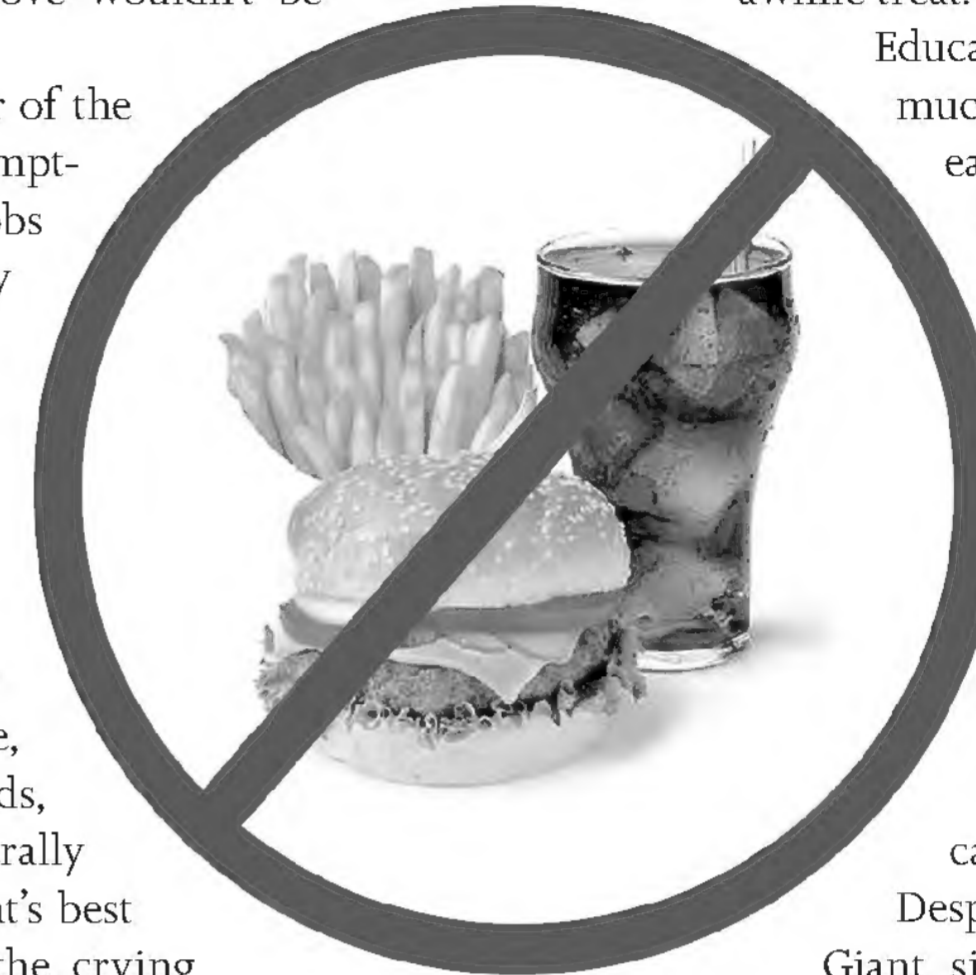
find the kid who doesn't like raspberry Jell-O, and just like that, you've gone from a (mildly) healthy granola bar to a jiggling mass of sugar.

By taking these foods out of schools, you're putting them out of reach of elementary children who are confined to the school grounds, while older students are forced to venture to nearby corner stores. Yes, they still have access to it; however, the harsh Edmonton winter weather (one that tends to stretch over half of the school year), combined with inherent laziness, is enough to discourage this behaviour and turn it from a daily habit to a once-in-awhile treat.

Education can only do so much to encourage healthy eating practices. No matter how much nutritional information you give out, it's still counteracted by what they see on television. Vegetables elicit reactions akin to those seen to rancid deer testicles in "Fear Factor," and when was the last time you heard a catchy slogan for carrots?

Despite his size, the Green Giant simply isn't a match for Mark Messier and his insatiable hunger for chips.

Though we wish it were otherwise, kids are the type who will jump off the proverbial bridge not to follow their friends, but because it feels good. If the choice is between a Snickers bar and a pack of celery sticks, little Billy's taste-buds are going to get the better of him, and he'll soon be wiping caramel off his chinny-chin-chin.



## Gold Key Society Recognition Award



The Students' Union Gold Key Award was created by the Students' Union President Tevie Miller in 1950 and is intended to recognize the best on campus; those who contribute most to making the University of Alberta a better place through their outstanding work in extra-curricular activities. This honour is bestowed on those people who contribute greatly to the campus community.

All members of the campus community are eligible for the award with the exception of the Students' Union Executive. The Gold Key Awards Committee shall have the discretion to award a number of Gold Key Recognition Awards. Notwithstanding other involvements, participation in Student Government, Volunteer Activities, Student Organizations, Student Services, and Community Involvement may be considered.

**Application Deadline is February 4th, 2008 at 5pm**

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For more information contact  
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## SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

### Grant MacEwan/University of Alberta Big Band Concert

Monday, 3 December at 7:30pm  
John L Haar Theatre (10045 155 Street)

Performing together on the same stage, the Grant MacEwan big band and the University of Alberta big band will combine this coming Monday, creating a band the size of which can't be described with a simple adjective like big. Rather, it would require a conglomeration of descriptors, like "ginormous" or "hugelarge." Conducted by professors Raymond Baril and Dr Tom Dust, the humungolossal group will play a wide selection of jazz standards and should provide an entertaining night for fans of the genre.

### Trooper

Thursday, 29 November at 8pm  
Century Casino (13103 Fort Road)

Here they come, classic rock group Trooper, driving in a bright white sports car on their way through Edmonton. These 40-year veterans of the Canadian rock scene are still rollin', waving their arms in the air, and honking at all the girls, despite reports by an old lady that that sports car was stolen. But, you may ask, who do they think they are? And more importantly, where did they get that car? All these questions and more will be answered at the concert.

### Sleuth

Directed by Kenneth Branagh  
Starring Michael Caine and Jude Law  
Opening 6 December at Princess Theatre

It's always been my opinion that Jude Law should leave romantic comedy behind and stick to firing at Nazis from behind rubble or acting as someone's genetic surrogate. Directed by Shakespearean provocateur Kenneth Branagh, Law ignores such advice as he portrays Milo Tindle, a hairdressing actor who seduces the wife of wealthy homeowner Andrew Wyke (Michael Caine) and attempts to get her to marry him. But Caine isn't about to give up without a fight, and starts using the strange contraptions and odd gizmos in his house to get the upper hand.

### Jesus Christ Superstar

Running 10-11 December at 7:30pm  
Jubilee Auditorium

As if Jesus didn't already have enough cred during yuletide, we have a full-blown musical that boasts his celebrity status right in the headline. Sure, Jesus is hot right now, but it's anyone's guess as to whether his star power can last.

Written by the famed duo Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, this whimsical stage show portrays Jesus in the last weeks of his life: a happier time in the Middle East, when extravagant choreographed dance ensembles broke out spontaneously, and no crucifixion was complete without jazz hands.

### The Nutcracker

Running 14-16 December  
Jubilee Auditorium

The timeless classic *The Nutcracker* is presented every Christmas season to teach young children about the wonders and joy of juvenile sexual humour.

Performed as the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra plays the Tchaikovsky score, the ballet has been choreographed by Mikko Nissinin and depicts the tale of Clara, a girl pulled into another world by her uncle's magic. Her doll, the Nutcracker, comes to life and leads a force into battle against the villainous Mouse King, who he vanquishes through swift, repeated blows to the groin. After his defeat, the lucid wooden puppet introduces Clara to a mystical land of magic, intrigue, and ruptured testicles.

JOHN KMECH  
Soon to be dreadless

# Losing Will walking a tightrope to fame

Joe Vanderhelm talks botched audio, improvising scripts, and hoping that his locally filmed flick—complete with Edmonton scenery and music—has enough pull to reach cult status

## filmpreview

### Losing Will

Runs 7-9 December  
Directed by Mike Robertson and Arlen Konopaki  
Starring Arlen Konopaki, Joe Vanderhelm, and Julian Faid  
Metro Cinema

BRYAN SAUNDERS  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

As Joe Vanderhelm, one of the stars of Highwire Films' *Losing Will*, puts it, producing a local independent movie is a lot like walking on a tightrope.

"When you think of [a] high-wire act, there's the chance of falling and the chance of failure, but that always just makes it all the more interesting to watch," he says. "People get captivated by something that can be dangerous [or] that is risky. Part of Highwire Films' mission statement is to take risks, one of those risks being filming local cinema because it's not the most popular thing."

But, as Vanderhelm says, when the risk pays off, it pays off big.

"[Local films don't] catch on very often, but every once in a while, you can get those little gems; every once in a while, you'll get a *Fubar*. While we certainly don't think that *Losing Will* is a shoo-in to become one of those, we think it has the potential."

*Losing Will* takes risk with plotline, too. The main character, Will (Arlen Konopaki), is suffering from depression after losing the use of his body to quadriplegia. Suddenly, Will announces that he wants to go on a road trip with his friends Jerry (Joe Vanderhelm) and Samuels (Julian Faid), and at the end of the road trip, he wants his friends to help him commit suicide.

It may sound dark, but *Losing Will* also has a hopeful note to it.

"Jerry and Samuels decide to take Will [on this road trip], but during the course of [it, they hope to] show him the value of life and hopefully change his mind," Vanderhelm explains.

Serious subject matter aside, there are surely chuckles to be had during the film. After all, the trio of actors are all improv comedy veterans with Edmonton's Rapid Fire Theatre. In fact, *Losing Will* was actually born from a scene at one of Rapid Fire's shows a couple of years ago.

After the performance, Konopaki suggested there was more to the scene than was explored, and he and his friends immediately went to work on turning that scene into a full-length movie.



"The [script] is improvised as well," Vanderhelm quips. "Meaning that we knew what the scenes were going to be about, but none of the dialogue was ever written down. So everything that is said in the movie was made up pretty much spontaneously."

**"[Local films don't] catch on very often, but every once in a while, you can get those little gems; every once in a while, you'll get a *Fubar*. While we certainly don't think that *Losing Will* is a shoo-in to become one of those, we think it has the potential."**

JOE VANDERHELM  
*LOSING WILL* CO-STAR

It again sounds risky, but between the three of them and cameraman/producer Mike Robertson, the group has over 30 years of combined improv experience.

This off-the-cuff style of acting almost lead to Vanderhelm losing all hope post-filming, when he had to do some automated dialogue replacement (ADR) work after the original audio from some of the scenes came out mangled.

ADR involves deleting the audio that was originally on the film and then sitting in a booth and saying your lines over again while

trying to match your speed and tone with how your lips are moving on film.

"I made a choice that my character was a nervous guy, and [that] he stuttered a lot," Vanderhelm laughs, "And trying to match your stuttering again and again and again is an incredibly difficult thing to do."

"There were times I just wanted to throw down my headphones and say 'Screw it! Just take the original audio, and it will sound like crap!' But I was reminded that we wanted our movie to be great visually, and [aurally] as well, so it had to be done."

In addition to Vanderhelm's stuttering ADR, local acts like Whitey Houston, Christian Hansen, Hot Panda, and The Corduroys also grace the film's soundtrack—and audiences will recognize many of the film's settings.

"You might recognize the Powerplant. You might recognize Murrieta's. You might just recognize some of the actual driving shots from being in and around Edmonton," Vanderhelm reveals.

"I mean, that's always a cool thing. That's why movies like the *Jesse James*' thing can be popular in the cities where they're filmed: people want to go out and say 'I know that street!' or 'I know that guy!'"

While he and the rest of *Losing Will*'s crew have to wait to see if their gamble will pay off, Vanderhelm has some advice for others.

"I think it's just really important that people realize that if they have a cool story to tell, they don't need super-fancy budgets or anything like that. They really just need a camera and some time to spend editing it and making it look good."

## siteunseen



www.whatisstephenharperreading.ca

ELLIOT GOODINE  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Sure, Stephen Harper's smart, but does the Prime Minister appreciate literature? Yann Martel, the author of the award-winning *Life of Pi*, is trying to figure it out.

Martel's taking time to write letters and pick books for his website, [whatisstephenharperreading.ca](http://whatisstephenharperreading.ca). Martel has vowed to send Harper one book and a personally written letter every two weeks for the remainder of Harper's stay in office.

According to Martel, the aim of the letters and the website is "not to educate—that would be arrogant—less than that: to *make suggestions* to his stillness." The list of books that has been sent so far is diverse, ranging from George Orwell to Agatha Christie to Voltaire.

In his letters, Martel takes some pretty good jabs at the PM, noting that PMs King and Laurier were both keen readers with a mass of books between them; in another letter, he points out that Harper once named the *Guinness Book of World Records*

as his favourite book.

The beauty of these letters is that they mock Harper subtly, rather than coming straight out and calling Harper a philistine who probably spends all of the free time watching Flames and Senators games.

Aside from the satirical manner of the site, it's also a great place to build a reading list. Of the 15 books listed since the site was launched in April, all of the titles are sure to be appreciated by Martel's readers.

The site also promises to post whatever response he receives from Harper. So far, there's been only response, from one of Harper's assistants: "On behalf of the Prime Minister, I would like to thank you for your recent letter and the copy of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*."

If you need to know what our PM isn't reading, Martel's site is a good place to start. Or you could ask Martel yourself when he comes to the Stanley A Milner Library theatre on 5 December.

# Contraband explores an uncomfortable-yet-possible future

## bookpreview

### Contraband

Written by Thomas Behe

Art by Phil Elliott

Available now as digital download;  
6 February for print edition

TYSON DURST

Arts & Entertainment Staff

When people think of *contraband*, they typically picture illegal goods such as street drugs or guns. But in today's society, where portable digital technology is commonplace, the distribution of explicit, violent reality content is the new *contraband* of the 21st century. Writer Thomas Behe and artist Phil Elliott explore this emerging and disturbing underground world in a new graphic novel of the same name.

Set in the near future, *Contraband* follows Toby, a young "citizen journalist" documenting this amateur underground scene and coerced into working for a black-market cellphone network known as "Contraband." Given the task of locating an anti-Contraband activist, Toby finds himself walking a dangerous edge between preserving his own safety and the well being of others. The dark, twisted underbelly of this uncomfortably familiar world of constant voyeurism is as thought-provoking as it is ominous in its implications.

"The type of voyeur camera-capture coming through in *Contraband* is

taking place in a number of different regions throughout the world," Behe, the novel's writer, explains. "Eastern countries have had video cell phones for several years; although, social networking doesn't seem to have taken off as much as in the West. In the UK, there have been isolated examples of the government taking action against people secretly filming others. Much of this has been associated with mobile bullying, youth fights, and other anti-social behaviour, but I feel this is just the beginning."

The artist of *Contraband*, Phil Elliott, got some first-hand experience with aggressive youths and mobile phones just prior to being contacted by Behe about the project.

"That experience was very strange; these kids were demanding money and filming me," Elliot says. "I was thinking at the time, 'What's going on here?' The kids were quite young, and this was taking place outside the town hall where I live. I still don't know whether they were trying to provoke me or why they were filming and whatever happened to the footage. This experience was still pretty raw when Thomas first got in touch," Elliott recalls.

As Behe elaborates, Elliott's artistic style was perfect for his script.

"Initially, I was checking out professional artists who could create a cool indie graphic novel—there's lots of new manga and cyber-punk styles out there, but I like Phil's more European style," he says. "I guess it's a bit like what the



French and Belgian artists were developing in the '60s and '70s. And he's clever; he knows how people live their lives today. His art is filled with warm characters, vivid scenery. It's easy to see why Phil is so well-respected as a pro comic artist."

Looking at the cover—which depicts a cell phone being converted into a functioning handgun—it's clear that the story presents many ideas and concepts that will force the reader to view everyday technology in ways they may never have considered before.

"Tucker, a key character, refers to how

Croatian police officers once busted some drug dealers who had a small gun modeled into a cell phone. I'd read this in an office email attachment a few years back, and thought it was the most twisted use of a mobile ever," Behe says.

As for why the voyeuristic drive in society seems nearly insatiable, there are no clear answers—but Elliott has a possible theory.

"Perhaps people have just got used to, or bored with, some of the sensationalist, gross-out stuff that's in films like *Hostel* or the *Saw* series. They want to see real violence—kids beating each

other up or abusing their teachers."

It's somewhat fitting that *Contraband* is being serialized in digital installments before it's collected in a print version next February. However, Behe's confident that print still has some advantages and appeal over pixels and bytes.

"I feel people who buy and enjoy graphic novels will always want something they can hold in their hands. A computer screen is no match for a physical book containing a fun story and artwork—it's just something you're going to want to keep."



DAVID RIDLEY

**WEAVING A RAINBOW** Art installations, including the one above, are in "Get Bent," a free exhibit currently up at the Alberta Gallery of Art. The show is part of Edmonton's queer arts festival, Exposure.

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# Sprouted from the Montreal scene

It may be the most hyped-up musical city in Canada, but to roots-rockers Plants and Animals, Montreal just happens to be the place they come from

## musicpreview

### Plants and Animals

Opening for Patrick Watson  
Saturday, 1 December at 8pm  
Myer Horowitz Theatre

SEAN STEELS  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

There's been a lot of buzz around Montreal rockers Plants and Animals recently: it's been three years since they released their self-titled debut EP, and expectations are high for their follow-up and first full-length disc, *Parc Avenue*, due in February.

But fans expecting a platter of the same are in for a big change in the band's sound when they see the group open up for Patrick Watson.

"It's been a long transformation since then," Warren Spicer, vocalist and guitarist for the group, comments. "That first EP was the result of a Canada Council recording grant I got to do this acoustic record I had in my imagination. Drummer Matthew Woodley, bassist Nic Basque, and I had been occasionally playing music, so we started rehearsing and putting it together."

Since that original vision, the group has undergone a steady transformation and managed to overcome first impressions to build some solid excitement for their new and indefin-

able roots-rock sound.

"I think all three of us were changing and morphing into different people, individually and as a band, until slowly the idea that we actually wanted to sing songs became something that we wanted to pursue," Spicer says, picking his words delicately.

A quirky and energetic band at heart, they found that the soft, acoustic tracks worked well as a recording experiment but fell flat on stage.

**"We're a Montreal band. It's where we learned to play together, make music, and grow as a band. It's very much a part of who we are."**

WARREN SPICER  
PLANTS AND ANIMALS

"Realistically, we're the same people, and it's the same line-up," Spicer says. "But that EP was very different from what we ended up deciding we wanted to do. There was this very natural transformation into what we are now. It just kind of happened."

Considering the current musical orgy going on in Montreal's streets, some people are attributing all the band's attention to location-based hype. The scene there

has been piquing curiosity across Canada for its artistic mystique and a yearly explosion of new bands. But according to Spicer, it's nothing special.

"It's intrigued people more than anything else; they hear so much about it and wonder what it's about," he explains. "Looking out from the inside, there's so much going on that you don't think too much about it. You're oblivious when you're a part of it, and don't realize what other people are seeing."

But oblivious or not, Plants and Animals attribute lots of their success to starting up in the red-hot cultural hub, and they concede that it's a big part of their identity.

"We're a Montreal band. It's where we learned to play together, make music, and grow as a band. It's very much a part of who we are," Spicer says.

Spicer also admits that their arty sound's reception has been hit and miss along the east coast, but it's undeniable that something has set these earthy tune-slingers apart from their peers.

Call it scenester hype, a successful recording experiment, or even dumb luck—anyway you slice it, Plants and Animals have managed to stick on the public radar where other local groups have slid right off.

With a chance to prove their mettle on long prairie highways and a full-length release around the corner, we'll soon all get a chance to see what the fuss is about.



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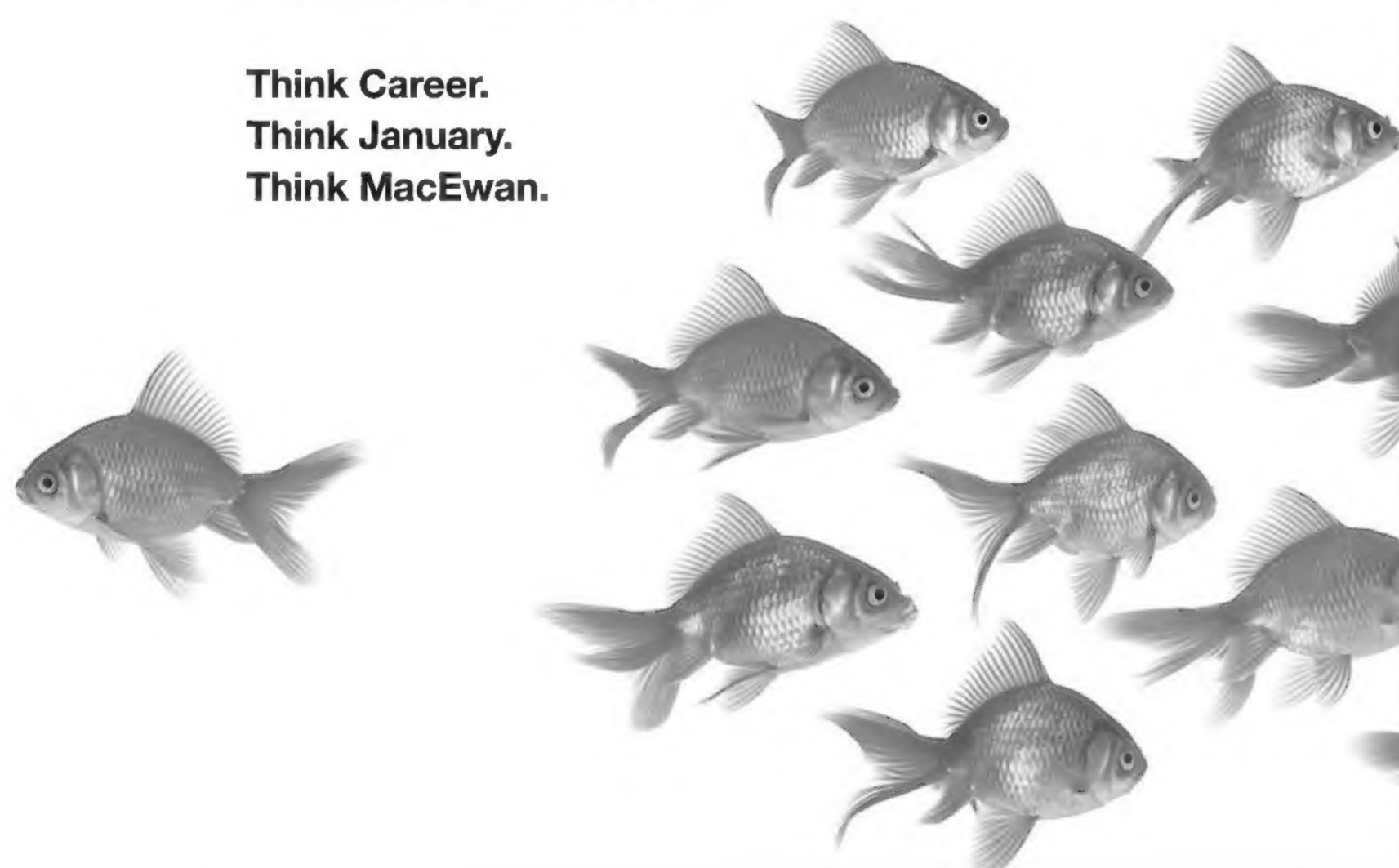
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# Assassin's Creed anything but deadly

Despite fantastic graphics, *Creed* won't leave a lasting mark with every gamer

## gamereview

**Assassin's Creed**  
Developed by Ubisoft  
Available Now

RAMIN OSTAD  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Few games released this year have been as polarizing as *Assassin's Creed*. Who would have figured that a game about a Persian assassin—or Hashashin, for you history buffs—during the Third Crusade would stir up heated debate? Some have called it tedious and shallow, while others think it's one of the few truly next-gen games. Both sides are have their points, really: it all depends on how you want to look at it.

There are a few things, however, that everyone can agree on. *Assassin's Creed* is probably the best-looking game this side of *Gears of War*: both visually and aurally, the game is astounding.

The game's four cities—Masyaf, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Acre—were all created with historical accuracy in mind, and it shows: the cities are huge; no two buildings, structures,

and inhabitants are quite the same; and you can't help but feel the effort that went into designing them.

The sound design also creates a living, breathing atmosphere for these cities. You hear vendors peddling their wares from their shops, conversations about in-game affairs, and plenty of ambient rambling to make you feel immersed in the setting.

But despite the fantastic world Ubisoft's created, debates rage around if the gameplay reaches the same heights of quality. As a member of the Hashashin, your job is to—you guessed it—hashasinate people. As Altair, you'll use your parkour-like skills to hop, skip, jump, and scale tall buildings to reach each target—I guess David Bell learned to time travel. But before you can do that, you need to learn more about your victims: where they hide out and what they're up to.

The methods you employ to do this are three-fold: pickpocketing, eavesdropping, and asking informants.

The issue is that, with nine targets in total, doing the same three things in varying order can get very tedious. You also don't have to do all of the information missions for each target, so you can often scrape by with the minimum

amount of work needed to whack a guy. It really comes down to a question of patience—and maybe a little perspective.

If you view each target as just that, then you'll really have no desire to steal from every pocket or beat up every informant. You want to complete your mission, and you'll do it as quickly as possible.

The payoff to doing every mission, however, is gaining an understanding of just who your target is and why your guild would want him dead, even though it's not really necessary. In fact, the game's story, while being surprisingly sci-fi, provides a pretty amusing metaphor for this: do you blindly follow orders, as is your duty, or do you question the task that's been asked of you?

Both styles of play are right, but those in the latter camp will probably enjoy the game a lot more. If you have the patience for it and, like me, tend to view games as artistic representation, then you'll enjoy just how much detail went into the setting and story—despite a cliffhanger ending.

If you're not that patient, you'll still enjoy *Assassin's Creed* for what it is, but what depth it offers may not be the kind you're looking for.

## culturaobscura

### Urban Explorers

VICTOR VARGAS  
Online Coordinator

Among the many duties a security guard has is to ensure that unauthorized persons aren't given access to restricted areas. This comes into conflict with the main objective of a "secret society" of people known as "The Urban Explorers Society," whose sole purpose is to get into places that they aren't suppose to be.

Now while they're relatively harmless, their ability to walk into a building and get into highly sensitive areas without ever being challenged and then brag about it has proven to everyone that no matter

how much security you have, there's always a way to beat it.

Understand that urban exploration is illegal. To participate in it involves the crime of trespassing and possibly breaking and entering. At the same time, urban explorers do have their own ethical code. The majority of explorers don't try and vandalize places—or at least leave any permanent damage. They tend to shy away from actively trying to defraud people or trick security systems, instead trying to find simple and ingenious methods in order to beat them. And also, urban explorers don't only annoy security guards—the targets are often abandoned or disused places like toxic sewers, smelly drains, haunted houses, abandoned schools, and the all-too-romantic condemned hospitals.

Urban exploration is not just about

breaking the law or travelling through a place where the air is filth—it's about bragging rights. Explorers often post their exploits on numerous websites and underground email newsletters that encourage others to try and replicate the feat. In fact, frequent targets of urban exploration often have a "guest book" where you can record that you, too, have travelled where all your explorer friends have gone before.

But most importantly, it's all about the rush of being able to go somewhere that you aren't allowed. After all, you, the urban explorer, managed to defeat the locks on the sewer grate and the security guard, and have reached a place only they eyes of janitors have seen. After all, a charge for trespassing surely must be worth the bragging rights of travelling through a mouse-infested sewer.

david bowie's  
written an estimated 550 songs.

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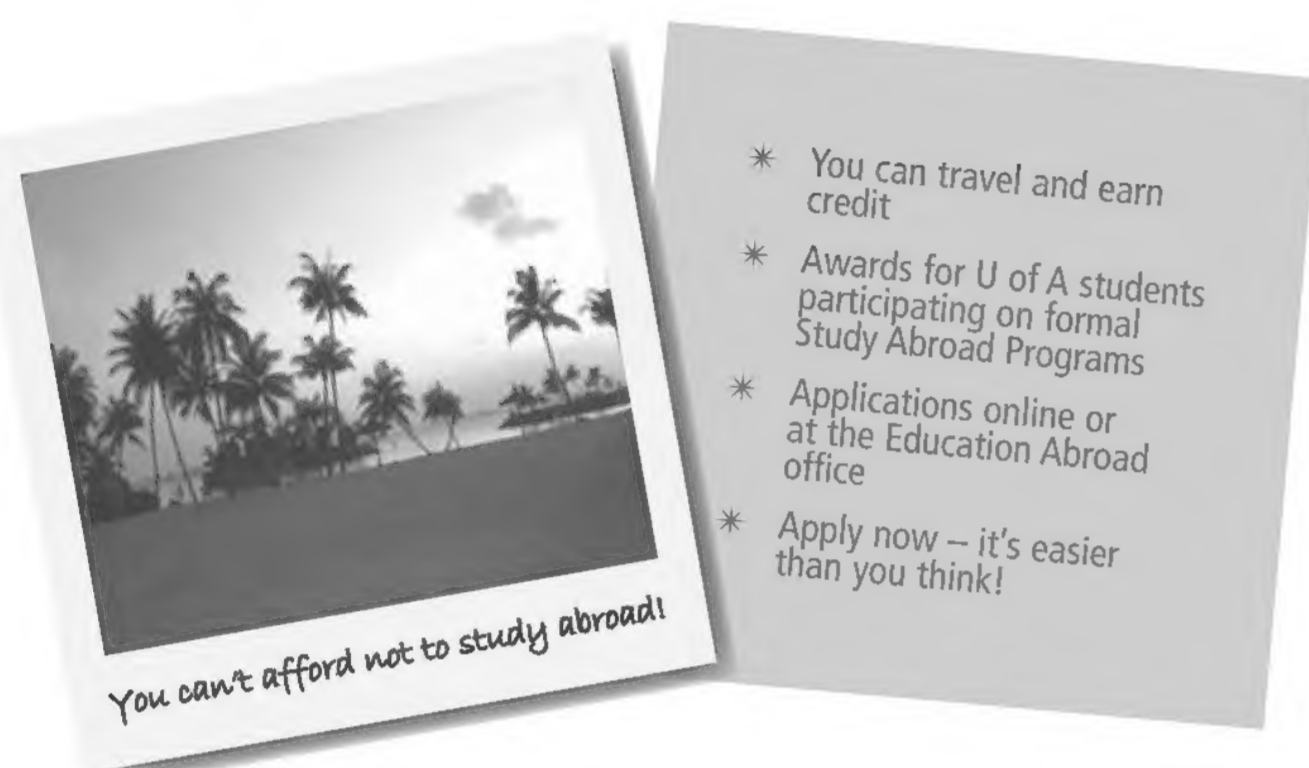
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## featuredalbum

**Yo Yo Yo Kids**  
*Yo, It's Christmas!*  
Razor and Tie Direct

KELSEY TANASIUK  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Perhaps Christmas carols aren't really your thing. Perhaps you'd prefer something with a little more hip-hop in its holiday spirit. Listening to *Yo, It's Christmas!* by the Yo Yo Yo Kids will probably make you want to pop a cap in someone's ass. But if you're looking for a completely ridiculous Christmas album to make your guests go "wha?" then *Yo, It's Christmas!* may just be the route you need to take.

Maybe you're looking for a cheap

Christmas gift for the little wannabe gangsta in your life. Provided they're under the age of twelve, they might actually like it, but their parents (or your spouse) will probably hate you. Also, if you're worried about lyrics like "Hey, it's Christmas / Gonna get myself some presents" spoiling the meaning of this jolly holiday, you can rest easy. Not only does *Yo, It's Christmas!* feature a rap-infused rendition of "Silent Night," but they also sing the age old

hymn, "Go Jesus / It's your birthday."

The same song, "Deck the Halls," also goes on to say "Don we now, our fly apparel / As we roll with that ancient yuletide carol." It would appear that the Yo Yo Yo Kids are afraid to say "gay apparel." Isn't that just adorably homophobic of them?

*Yo, It's Christmas!* is filled with G-rated, kid-friendly Christmas rap that doesn't just say "dis ho, dat ho" and riddle itself with profanity. Unfortunately for the parents of the target audience, kids might just eat this up and play it over and over.

*Yo, It's Christmas!* can still be a source of a good laugh for big people due to its sheer ridiculousness, but only for a moment.

To hear excerpts from *Yo, It's Christmas!*, or any of the other holiday-themed albums shown here, go [www.thegatewayonline.ca](http://www.thegatewayonline.ca) and click on the editors' playlist.



## albumreview

**KidzBop**  
*The Coolest KidzBop Christmas Ever!*  
Razor and Tie Direct

JOHN KMECH  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Upon first seeing the inaugural KidzBop Christmas album, I wholly expected it, based on the sizable font of the title, to be the coolest and best KidzBop Christmas album I'd ever heard. Despite such a superficial judgment, the album still disappointed, as it managed to come in second place in a category by itself, while simultaneously destroying all faith I have in the salvation of the human race.

The initial idea of forcing children to sing for our amusement seems like

a good one when you consider roving groups of "Deck the Halls" carolers. But KidzBop removes the excitement associated with scaring them away using Rottweilers to give a much more terrifying and grotesque consequence.

Every song on the KidzBop album starts off strong. Then, just as you realize you're simply listening to a classic Christmas carol, the singing starts, ruining a perfectly joyous Christmas song. I've attended many elementary Christmas concerts in my day, and

never before have the voices of children sounded so shrill, grating, and intolerable. What's more disturbing is they're generally accompanied by the vocals of older men that sound like they've been court-ordered to remain 50 yards from any child and are more gin-soaked than Santa on Boxing Day.

As one of my colleagues pointed out, "This is like that gift that an out-of-touch grandma gets an unsuspecting preteen to appear cool." But I can't imagine any child, no matter how lame, actually finding this album hip or enjoyable. In fact, its existence seems positively unnecessary. Why change old standbys that already have proven staying power? I'm sure kids will appreciate those more.

However, this album does have use, as it provides a much more affordable and environmentally friendly alternative to coal. Your little cousin will never spill grape juice on your Zeppelin record ever again.



## albumreview

**Various Artists**  
*Alternative Rock Xmas*  
Capitol Records

SARAH SCOTT  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

To all of you who are sick and tired of the "traditional" Christmas tunes your parents have plugged in every December for as far back as you can remember, it's time to break out the eggnog and celebrate: *Alternative Rock Xmas* twists the Christmas carols you know and hate into rock hits you'll be willing to break out in the middle of summer.

The album showcases a variety of

artists, including Sinead O'Connor doing "Silent Night," Jimmy Eat World playing "Christmas Card" and "12/23/95," and The Thrills' version of "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus."

A fantastic performance of "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" by veteran pop punk band The Alarm, along with original pieces like Relient K's "In Like A Lion (Always

Winter,)" a nod to CS Lewis's classic story, gives the album an eclectic feel—you never quite know what you're going to hear next.

But for every exceptional track—surprisingly, "Little Drummer Boy" and "Let It Snow" were among the gems of the album, there was at least one that wasn't so sparkly. Both songs by The Decemberists—"Please Daddy (Don't Get Drunk This Christmas)" and "Angel, Won't You Call Me?"—were a drag, and difficult to get through. This album will have you forever getting up to switch to one of the stronger tracks, as it's littered with duds.

Nevertheless, its star tracks shine, and this still remains the only album I've ever heard where you can hear to Everclear perform a sultry rendition of "Santa Baby."



## albumreview

**Relient K**  
*Let It Snow Baby ... Let It Reindeer*  
Capitol Records

CHRIS NOVAK  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Christmas albums can be a tired affair; after all, countless artists have made them. It's nice to hear some carols around the holidays, but one can only hear so many rehashed versions of "Jingle Bells" before being compelled to deck the singer rather than the halls.

Now, Christian pop-punks Relient K are giving the holiday album a go. Straight from the clever pun in the title, *Let It Snow Baby ... Let It Reindeer* gives you the sense that this

album is a little different than the standard holiday fare. By injecting some personality, charm, and a little punk rock into Christmas classics, Relient K breathes new life into the Christmas album form.

*Let It Reindeer* consists of ten holiday classics and six Relient K originals. Pop-punk versions of "The 12 Days of Christmas" and "Angels We Have Heard on High" sound surprisingly natural, and silly songs such as

"Santa Claus is Thumbing To Town" keep the tone light-hearted and fun. The band also includes several more traditional covers that stand up equally well: make sure you stick around for the bonus track, a ridiculous rendition of "Good King Wenceslas" that's sure to make you laugh.

The album also explores the darker side of the holidays, to varying degrees of success. The drippy "I Hate Christmas Parties" is painfully depressing, but outstanding originals "Merry Christmas (Here's To Many More)" and "Boxing Day" are sombre yet optimistic. These two tracks in particular showcase the conflicted emotions that are so common in the yuletide season.

From the opening chords to singer Matt Thiessen's closing monologue, Relient K has made an instantly likeable holiday gem.

# Mumps outbreak puts hockey game on ice

With six Dinos in quarantine and eight more probably sick, this weekend's series between Calgary and the Bears has been put off

PAUL OWEN  
Managing Editor

The home-and-home series between the Calgary Dinos and Alberta Golden Bears hockey teams scheduled for this weekend has been postponed after a mumps outbreak at the University of Calgary.

Six Dinos have been diagnosed with the disease—which is transmitted through saliva, and causes vomiting, swollen glands, and potentially inflamed testicles—and eight more are showing symptoms, prompting health officials recommend that this weekend's games be rescheduled to prevent the spread of the disease.

"It came from the regional health board," Calgary head coach Scott Atkinson said. "One of our players got the mumps from his girlfriend about a month ago. As soon as we knew that, we became a priority group to be inoculated. By the time we identified we were at risk, it was too late. So the issue of us being able to field a team is one part of it, but probably the most important part is that we would then put other teams at risk. Right now, the feeling of the medical people is that we pose a risk to the U of A players."

In addition to the postponement of this weekend's games, the Dinos were forced to cancel their exhibition match against the Canadian World Junior Championships team on 13 December.

Golden Bears head coach Eric Thurston expressed regret over not playing this weekend, as he felt his team was performing strongly, and was looking forward to the match-up against Calgary.

"I'm very disappointed," he said. "I like the way our team was playing; I like that we were going to have a good challenge ahead of us. [Injured defenceman Kyle] Fecho was going to come back Friday and play, and there was just a lot of excitement."

Make-up dates have not yet been announced, but both Atkinson and Thurston brought up the potential for mid-week rematches—perhaps on each team's bye week in the second half—or the potential to play three games when the Bears visit Calgary in mid-January, though Thurston wasn't in favour of that plan.

"Three games in three days is just tough," he said.

Rescheduling will be a joint venture from both athletic departments in the coming weeks.



FILEPHOTO: SHAUN MOTT

**THAT'S SOME MANLY ICE DANCING** The mumps outbreak on Calgary's team means that it'll be a while before the Bears play the Dinos again.

## Vigilant trainers keep athletes' bugs at bay

ROBIN COLLUM  
Sports Editor

Participating in varsity sports is a two-sided coin when it comes to health. On one hand, university athletes are usually stronger and in better shape than the general student population; on the other, they're a group that spends a lot of time in close proximity, sharing water bottles and germs.

This means—as Calgary's men's hockey team now knows first-hand—that if one person on a team is sick, it's incredibly easy for everyone else to catch the same bug.

"This is a group that breathes and sweats and spits on each other fairly closely; we know it's a breeding ground," Joan Matthews-White, the U of A's head athletic therapist, said.

Team therapists and trainers are in charge of trying to make sure that Alberta athletes stay as healthy as possible. Something on the scale of the mumps outbreak that sidelined the Dinos is out of the usual scope of their duties, and the Athletics Department

deferred to Capital Health's contagious disease protocols.

But in the normal course of the year, therapists have to deal with colds, the flu, and other more typical illnesses. For this, they don't have specific guidelines as how to react.

"Is there a policy? Nope," Matthews-White said. "We do have processes and protocols in place, but there's not a written recipe that says, 'Here's how to stay healthy.'"

Matthews-White said that trainers generally approach disease-prevention as an educational issue.

"Basically, athlete health is promoted in that idea of self-management," she said. "You have to be vulnerable to get the flu or a cold, so we talk to athletes about making good decisions, making good choices, [and] getting lots of sleep. You know the environment: we have people who are working, up hours late studying, and at practice. It's a population that's at high risk."

Trainers make it a priority to do what Matthews-White calls the "small

things" that reduce the risk of illness transmission, such as encouraging athletes to use separate water bottles and towels, wash their hands frequently, and cover their mouths.

**"You have to be vulnerable to get the flu or cold, so we talk to athletes about making good decisions, making good choices, [and] getting lots of sleep."**

JOAN MATTHEWS-WHITE  
U OF A HEAD ATHLETIC THERAPIST

"They're just everyday, common-sense things, but now we have a coach or trainer telling them," she said.

Matthews-White believes in the U of A's approach, crediting it with protecting athletes from last year's

Norovirus outbreak in Lister Hall.

"I think we've been really great at it. We never got Norwalk. We had a couple of athletes who lived in Lister who got it, but it never went through our varsity athletes—that's pretty cool," she said.

The challenge with the process is that student-athletes don't always pay attention, an issue Bears basketball head coach Don Horwood acknowledged.

"Of course, we do end up getting players who do dumb things, like drinking from another player's water bottle and that sort of thing, and we try to avoid that and we remind them of it, but they're still kids," he said. "I don't think you could say that athletes are any different than anybody else in the student body."

That's why having someone looking out for their health is so important, he said.

"The difference is that they're in contact daily with trainers, so they're reminded daily how important various things are. I give credit to them for the health of our athletes."

## SPORTS STOCKINGS

Compiled by Robin Collum

### Highway to the infection zone

The Pandas basketball team (6-2) were in Calgary last weekend, and beat the Dinos (4-4) both nights. The lead went back and forth throughout Friday's game, but the Pandas locked it up in the last few minutes and finished with a 65-58 win. On Saturday, they overcame a 15-point deficit at the half to win 84-77.

This weekend they'll be in Lethbridge, trying to avoid any mumps-y spit while playing the Pronghorns (1-7).

### Don't let the basketballs catch fire

The Bears basketball team (5-3) will be in Lethbridge this weekend, and they'll be trying to make up for last weekend's disappointments in Calgary (7-1). Alberta lost 95-74 on Friday and went down 98-73 Saturday.

They'll be hoping to redeem themselves and maintain their tenth-place CIS ranking against the Pronghorns (0-8).

# Pandas set to endanger Chinese hockey team

Unable to find proper competition at home, Team China's preparing for Worlds with games against Canadian teams like the U of A

ROBIN COLLUM  
Sports Editor

When you live in Canada, it's easy to take our hockey culture for granted. Nearly everyone is at least a casual fan of the game, and millions of Canadians—male and female alike—play it.

In China, this isn't the case. There, hockey is mostly unknown or ignored, and the female players are few. This means that the Chinese women's national hockey team doesn't get a lot of competition in its own country.

So they came to Canada, and this Saturday, they'll be facing off against the Pandas.

"It's really hard to get games in China," coach Steve Carlyle explained. "There are a few boys' teams, but hockey is not a huge sport, as you can imagine, in China."

The team is in Alberta for three months to help them train for the IIHF World Championships, which will be held in Harbin, China, in April next year. Calgary's semi-pro women's team Oval X-treme, are hosting the Chinese, and they have use of the Calgary Olympic rink and facilities.

In addition to the upcoming game against the Pandas, they've had a chance to play other colleges and universities, midget teams, and Western Women's Hockey League teams like the X-treme. The depth of competition is a huge change from their situation at home.

"There are only about 200 women that actually play [in China]," Carlyle said. "So that puts us at a bit of a disadvantage; you probably have more than

200 playing in Sherwood Park. They're trying to compete internationally with that kind of a base, so it's a difficult task; not being able to get opposition creates a problem for them."

But playing in a hockey-mad country like Canada has been a huge help for the team, according to Carlyle.

"They're trying to learn a lot about Canadian hockey," Carlyle said. "We're playing maybe a little different systems than they've played in the past, and they're coming along quickly with those, and really improving over the games that we've played."

"The girls work really hard. They train twice a day either off-ice or on-ice. They take it very seriously, and they work very hard at it."

Saturday's exhibition game won't just help the Chinese women, though. Pandas head coach Howie Draper expects his players to get a lot out of it as well.

"It gives us a great opportunity to play a team of a really high calibre," he said. "Any time we can play a team that's very skilled, it can only help us get better."

"I think it's also just a great experience for our players to be able to play players from a different country, from a cultural perspective as well as from a personal development perspective."

The Pandas played their last conference games of the fall semester last weekend—earning two shutouts against Lethbridge—and Draper sees this as a good way to wrap up the first half of the season.

"I think we want to keep it as light as possible and have a lot of fun. We



FILE PHOTO: LAUREN STIEGLITZ

**THE PEOPLES' PUCKS** National—and capitalist—pride will be on the line when the Pandas go up against Team China.

want to have a lot of flow this weekend and look forward to the game, rather than get too serious about it."

And though they'll be playing China's best, Draper's confident his players will be able to hold their own on the ice.

"History has shown that they're very good with their sticks, but that they aren't necessarily as physical," he said. "I think that our advantage will likely be our ability to play defence. I think the Chinese team, though, they're going to be very skilled; my

experience is that maybe they don't quite have the ability to finish that some other teams throughout the world would have. I think we'll probably out-defence them."

The puck drops on Saturday night at 7pm in Clare Drake.

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STU TREBELCO

**GAME, SET, MATCH** The Bears want to bring their big hits down with them to California for an NCAA exhibition tourney.

# Bears setting their sights on Bisons, Californians

NICK FROST  
Sports Staff

The first half of conference play in Canada West men's volleyball comes to a close this weekend as the Golden Bears (7-1) square off in a weekend set at home against the University of Manitoba Bisons (3-5).

The halfway point of the season is approaching, and the Bears have a month-long break in which to re-examine and continue working on the aspects of their game that put them at the top of the Canada West standings. Head coach Terry Danyluk's midterm assessment of his players is mostly positive; however, there are a few aspects that could use a little bit of fine-tuning.

"The most common thing that I keep talking about is that our depth has increased since the beginning of the year," Danyluk explained. "I think that we've got good strengths in all of our positions, and we've had some young guys step into the roles in middle positions this year that have done great jobs."

"Also, I think our ball control has improved since the beginning of the year, which is something I want to continue to work on."

While it may seem like an eternity

for the Bears until their next conference action in mid-January, they'll get plenty of opportunities to stay fresh and on top of their game during the lay-off. They will continue practicing until 15 December, followed by a two-week break. Over New Year's, they'll make an appearance as the lone CIS representative at an eight-team NCAA invitational in Santa Barbara, California.

**"It's a school that we've seen have a lot of comfortable seasonal play over the past ten or 15 years."**

**TERRY DANYLUK**  
BEARS VOLLEYBALL HEAD COACH

Exotic trips aside, the Bears' focus remains on this upcoming weekend, as they face the Bisons squad for the first time this season. Manitoba has won three of its last four matches and appears to be building some momentum up the standings. That's not surprising, according to Danyluk, given the success that Manitoba's program

has seen in past years.

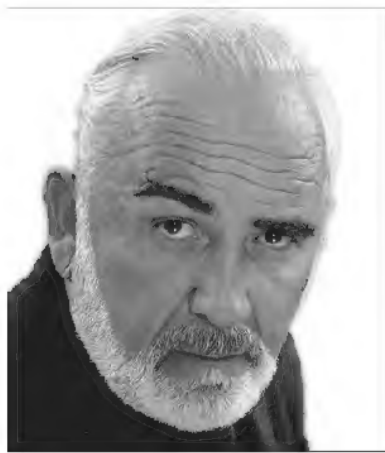
"Manitoba has a real strong volleyball tradition—they've won, outside of maybe Winnipeg, the most number of national championships in [CIS] history," Danyluk said. "It's a school that we've seen have a lot of comfortable seasonal play over the last ten or 15 years. Being a strong team with a strong tradition, it's a team that you can never take too lightly."

Alberta expects the strongest challenge to come from the Bisons' setting and passing abilities, notably from setter Drew Venables, who currently sits in the top five in Canada West with 9.43 assists/game, and Stefan Bouw, who complements Venables in terms of setting and poses a potential threat to the Bears on the left-side of the court.

"Venables is sort of their mainstay from past few years; he's probably one of the guys that can do the most for them," Danyluk said. "I think he's one of the guys taking on the leadership role and, as the starting setter, is getting a lot of contacts. I'd say, along with Stefan Bouw, those are the two guys that I think will pose the greatest challenge to our team."

Games begin at 7pm in the Main Gym both evenings.

## Poetry interlude: How the Pats stole Xmas



MARC  
AFFELD

Sports  
Commentary

Belichick is coaching the best football in years—but I think he's gone crazy, that's one of my fears. Every Who down in Who-ville respects him a lot—but some folks, who live just North of Who-ville, do not!

Belichick's been acting more surly this season. Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.

It could be, perhaps, that his shoes are too tight. It could be that his head isn't screwed on quite right—but I think that the most likely reason of all, might be that his heart is two sizes too small.

His fans were amazed by the teams he had beaten, 'til they discovered that he had been cheating. All that the fans wanted was for him to confess—he chose to be a dick and created a mess.

I can practically hear him in his cave right now: "I must stop our first loss from coming! But how?"

"I know just what to do!" Bill will laugh in his throat. And he'll make a quick Santa Claus hat and a coat. And he'll chuckle and cluck, "What a great

football trick! With this coat and this hat, I'll look just like Saint Nick!"

Then he'll break into your house with a smile most unpleasant across his whole face, and he'll take each present!

Pop guns! And bicycles! Roller skates! Drums! Checkerboards! Tricycles! Popcorn! And plums!

And he'll stuff them in bags; then the coach, very nimbly, will stuff all the bags, one by one, up the chimney!

This idea is stupid, and won't likely work, but he'll be dealt his first loss while dressed like a jerk.

Then maybe the true meaning of football will come through, and Bill will find the heart of ten coaches, plus two.

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# THE GATEWAY

volume XCVIII number 23 ♦ the official student newspaper at the university of alberta ♦ www.thegatewayonline.ca ♦ thursday, 29 november, 2007



MIKE OTTO

**IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE FINALS** Hiding at home in your warm bed won't help: it's time to accept that the end of the semester, like the frigid Edmonton winter, is upon us. This means it's also time for *Gateway* editors to salvage what's left of their academic careers. We'll be back on 8 January, but look for a holiday treat on newsstands next week.

## Centralized DFU opt-out raises concerns

APIRG is one service wishing it had been consulted

RYAN HEISE  
Deputy News Editor

The initial passing of a controversial bill by Students' Council on 20 November has some student-funded organizations concerned about their future operations.

Bill 6, which reads, "For all Dedicated Fee Units (DFUs) for which an opt out is available, the opt out must be made available to students via a centralized, SU run, online service," passed its first reading by a vote of 23 in favour, two abstentions, and 13 against.

However, the debate at the meeting was fairly heated, with both an amendment to the reading of the bill and a motion to table it to a later date failing by a narrow margin.

Business councillor Scott Nicol, who introduced the bill, said he feels that the current methods for opting out of DFUs have been ineffective for students.

"The [opt-out] processes have stagnated and remained fairly manual," Nicol said. "As a result of this, it has continued to be inefficient for students to opt out."

"Bill 6 needs to come to fruition because technology has advanced to a point where having a centralized opt-out is technologically much less costly than it was in years gone by."

The two DFUs that this opt-out system would most greatly affect would be the Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG) and the SU-run Access Fund.

APIRG is a student-run, non-profit organization that provides resources for public interest projects, while the Access Fund is a program that gives bursaries to University of Alberta students in financial need. While the Access Fund currently has a limited online opt-out option, to opt out of APIRG, students can either go to their office or submit a form via mail.

When asked about the passing of Bill

6, members of APIRG were primarily concerned with the lack of consultation on the matter.

"Bill 6 looks well-intentioned, but there's a lot of underlying consequences that weren't necessarily thought of originally or brought to the table," explained Brooke Leifso, an APIRG board member.

**"Bill 6 looks well-intentioned, but there's a lot of underlying consequences that weren't necessarily thought of originally or brought to the table."**

BROOKE LEIFSO  
APIRG BOARD MEMBER

"I think that by not consulting the dedicated fee units affected in the first place, and then not allowing it to be tabled and to allow another couple of weeks of consultation, they sort of did themselves a disservice, and probably their constituents. And they definitely did the dedicated fee units a disservice," said Leah Orr, APIRG's outreach and financial coordinator.

But Nicol doesn't feel that this consultation process is as necessary as those involved in the specific DFUs.

"There's an abstraction between the need to consult on that level because we are not [...] changing the funding structure that students have approved in referendums," Nicol said. "Students' Council [...] has created the DFU-funding mechanism, and we can control how it is run. Hopefully that will be done to the benefit of students."

PLEASE SEE **DFU** ♦ PAGE 4

## U of A team comes in first at int'l supercomputing competition

JONATHAN TAVES  
News Staff

A team from the University of Alberta made the biggest little splash at November's annual Supercomputing 2007 (SC07) conference in Reno, Nevada, winning the first-ever Cluster Challenge.

The group of five undergraduates and one high-school student, under the leadership of Dr Paul Lu, a professor in the Faculty of Computer Science, beat out four teams from American universities and one from Taiwan.

"The single most enjoyable thing was working

with this team. They were all wonderful. There was no slacker in the group; there was no weak link," Lu said.

The students had worked together on their winning computer since mid-September. To qualify, none of them could have a university degree in any area.

Andrew Nisbet, a team member in his first year of studies at 44 years of age, took advantage of the chance to gain experience that isn't readily available.

"The competition has given me exposure to an area of computer science that isn't taught at the undergrad level," he said. "[With super-

computing], they're trying to squeak out every last possible thing from a computer they can, so there is just a huge opportunity for learning."

The team had the greatest age range at the competition, from Nisbet to 16-year-old high-school student Stephen Portillo—a former summer intern of Lu's.

The group built the machine with expensive hardware on loan from the high-performance computing company Silicon Graphics, who also paid for the team's travel expenses.

"If you were to pay full retail cost for the cluster [that the team used], you would be looking at something like \$90 000," Lu said.

The computer's capability was tested with sophisticated scientific applications: a chemistry code program, an application that studies ocean currents, and another program that generates realistic computer images using a technique called ray tracing.

"The hardest part was working with these applications, because most of them are built by scientists for scientists," said Paul Greidanus, another undergraduate team member.

To understand the science behind the programs, the team used the knowledge of experts in specific fields around the U of A.

PLEASE SEE **COMPUTER** ♦ PAGE 2

### Inside

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### Off to the workforce

Graham Lettner is off to the real engineering world, and muses over what it means to receive the iron ring.

OPINION, PAGE 9



### Off with the Forces

Paul Owen profiles Kris Porlier, a U of A student who's off to serve with the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.

FEATURE, PAGE 11



## Get on board with **U-Pass**

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STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
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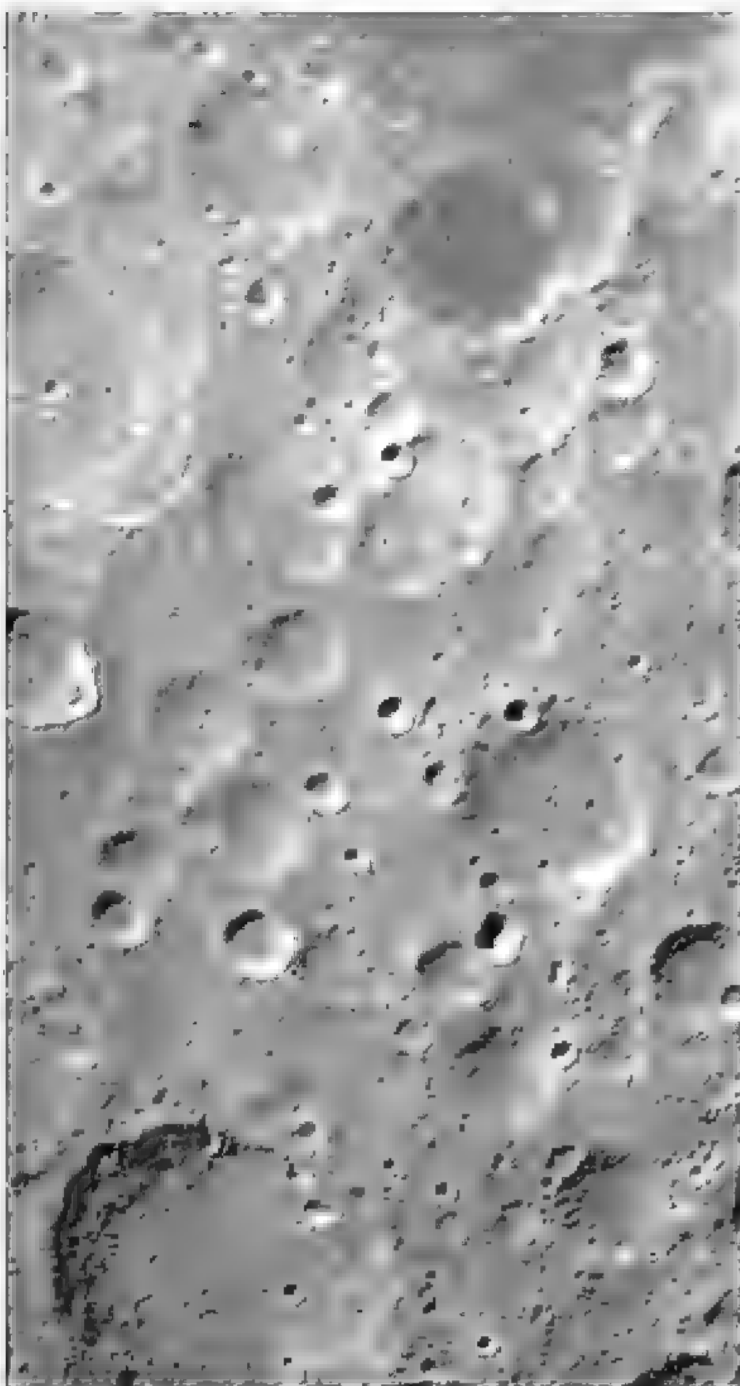


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**astronowatch**

by Kati Kovacs

How about before we get our astronomy lesson for the week, I tell you all the things I hate right now. Sound good? Alright. I hate being sick, the LRT expansion, apartments being torn down, winter, snow, bad muffins, whiney kitties, getting fatter, and professors with an abnormally high body temperatures. Whew! I feel so much better now!

China had something to celebrate this week. Premier Wen Jiabao unveiled the first lunar image taken by the Chang'e 1 lunar probe at a gala ceremony this past Monday. Chang'e 1 is only the first

part of China's ambitious lunar exploration plans. A lunar landing is planned for 2012, and a sample-return mission is in the works for 2020. We'll see.

Mars is still up and about this week. Look for it in the east-northeast at about 9pm. It'll be the bright red object two fist-widths from the horizon. Right now, Mars is in the constellation of Gemini. The two bright stars to the lower left of Mars right now are Castor (upper star) and Pollux (lower star).

*AstronoWatch is a weekly feature that covers the goings-on in the night skies, the galaxy, and sometimes even Kati's personal life.*



SHAUN MOTT

**CLASSIFIEDS**

To place a classified ad, please go to [www.campusclassifieds.ca](http://www.campusclassifieds.ca)

**FOR RENT**

Looking for a place to live? Check out [www.rentingspaces.ca](http://www.rentingspaces.ca), the student housing registry. Free to search and free for students to post roommate listings!

Condo in Calgary. 1540 29 St NW, available 1 May, 2008. 3 bedroom + office, fully furnished, includes utilities, internet, phone, basic cable, washer and dryer within unit, close to U of C and LRT. 1800/month. Call Linda 14033479855.

Stop paying rent—why rent when you can own? Free list of homes available with no money down, under \$1200/month. Free recorded message 1-800-615-6094 ID# 1051

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Library Craft Sale 29 and 30 November,

9:30am-3pm, Room 3-03 Cameron Library Free Admission/Door Prizes.

Red Deer College offers Spanish 101 in Guadajara 23 May-22 June, 2008 [rdc.ab.ca/continuingeducation](http://rdc.ab.ca/continuingeducation)

Red Deer College in Honduras 26 April-12 May, 2008 INTD 301 (transfers to university of Alberta Nursing Faculty as Interdisciplinary 370) Develop cross-cultural competencies through immersion in an international setting. Focus on interagency collaborations and practical experience emphasizing global issues and their impact on health. [www.rdc.ab.ca/continuingeducation](http://www.rdc.ab.ca/continuingeducation) or [ma.funk@rdc.ab.ca](mailto:ma.funk@rdc.ab.ca) or [maureen.mateka@rdc.ab.ca](mailto:maureen.mateka@rdc.ab.ca)

American Sign Language Class Level One, non-credit course, begins 17 January, 2008 for twelve weeks Thursdays, 6:30pm-9:30pm, \$125. Contact Specialized Support and Disability Services, U of A, 492-3381, 2-800 SUB for registration.

**EMPLOYMENT - PART TIME**

Part time field service personnel wanted serving Edmonton and area. Flexible schedules, uniform provided. Competitive compensation. Must have reliable transportation. Please call 780-292-2467 or 481-4600, fax 428-4610

Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory at WEM requires part time sales staff, days evenings

and weekends. Work with chocolate! How good can that be? Apply with resume or call Colin @ 481-4100.

Be a basketball ref—Cnic 7 and 8 Dec [www.thneepoa.com](http://www.thneepoa.com) 988-485 Cash Payment Great Reference

**EMPLOYMENT - TEMPORARY**

APIRG is seeking a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the 2008 board elections. Dates of employment are 6 Dec, 2007 to 1 Apr, 2008. \$1000 non-refundable fee will be provided. Must be a U of A undergrad who has not opted out of the APIRG fee. Complete job description at [www.apirg.org](http://www.apirg.org). Submit letter of interest and resume to [apirg@ua.perta.ca](mailto:apirg@ua.perta.ca) by 5pm, Fri 30 Nov.

**VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

Volunteers needed to teach English as a second language to adult newcomers. Classroom setting, 2-3 hrs/week, downtown. No exp. necessary. Ongoing training provided. Great opportunity to meet people from around the world. Contact Anne-Marie at CCI-LEX, 944-0792, [exprogram@cci-ex.ca](mailto:exprogram@cci-ex.ca)

**PERSONALS**

Single? Try speed dating with Eightminutedate on 4 Dec at the Fidd Lounge. Age groups 24-36, 37-48, and 49-59. Pre-register at 457-8535 or [www.eightminutedate.ca](http://www.eightminutedate.ca).

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For information about the free mumps immunization, your eligibility and clinics in your area, please call:  
Calgary Health Link (403) 943-5465  
Edmonton Health Link (780) 408-5465  
Health Link Alberta (toll-free) 1-866-408-5465  
or visit: [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca)

**Protect yourself against the mumps.**

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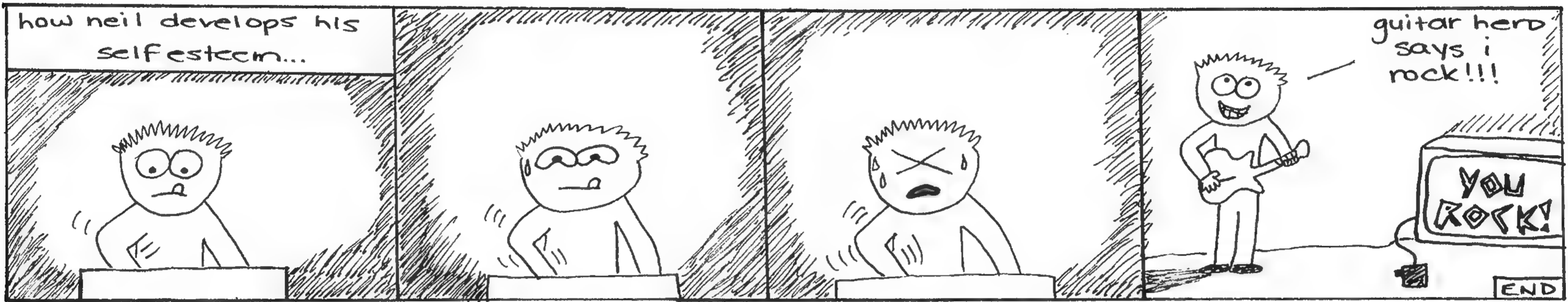


Adapted with permission from Province of Nova Scotia.

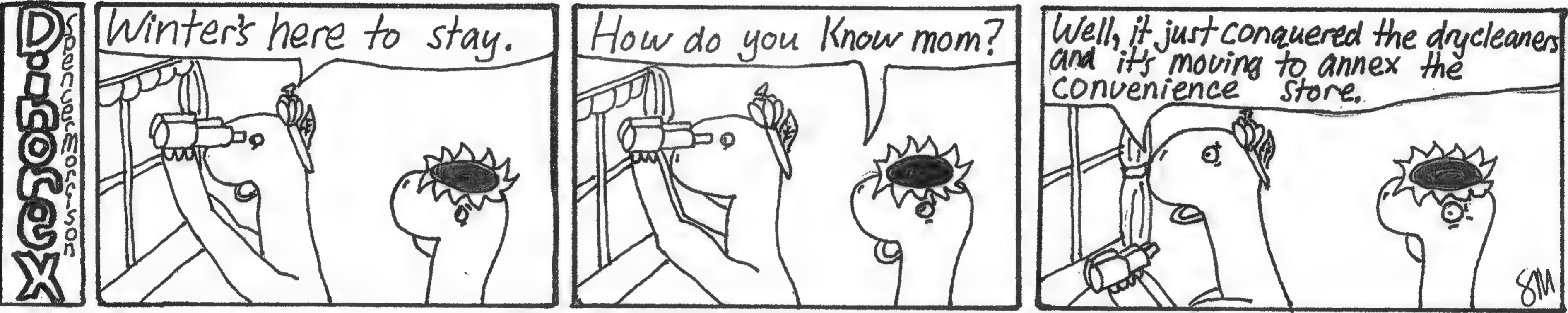
OUR DEAR LEADER by Adam Gaumont



SIGNIFICANT FIGURES by Vicki Olson



DINOREX by Spencer Morrison



# SUMMER STUDENTSHIP

## INFORMATION SESSION

- AHFMR Summer Studentships assist undergraduate students who:**
- >> Are curious about health research as an educational or career pathway
  - >> Have exceptional academic records
  - >> Want mentorship by top scientists
  - >> Want to participate in laboratory research
  - >> Are motivated to excel
  - > Are looking for information on how to apply

The Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research is hosting an information session for students wishing to apply for a 2008 Summer Studentship.

**WHEN:**  
Monday,  
December 3, 2007  
11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

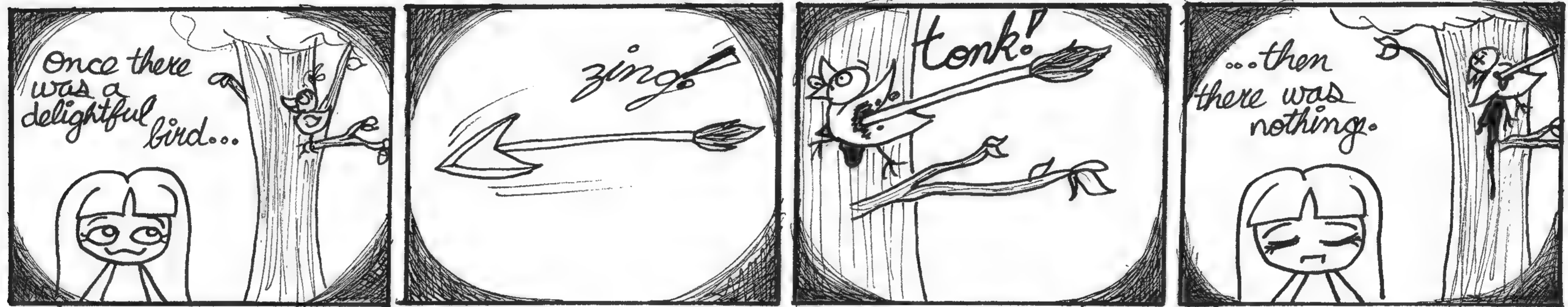
**WHERE:**  
Room 2-07  
Heritage Medical Research Centre

**WHO:**  
All undergraduate students, medical  
students and grade 12 students  
who have HYRS or other research  
experience.

THE RESTLESS WICKED by Marie Gojmerac



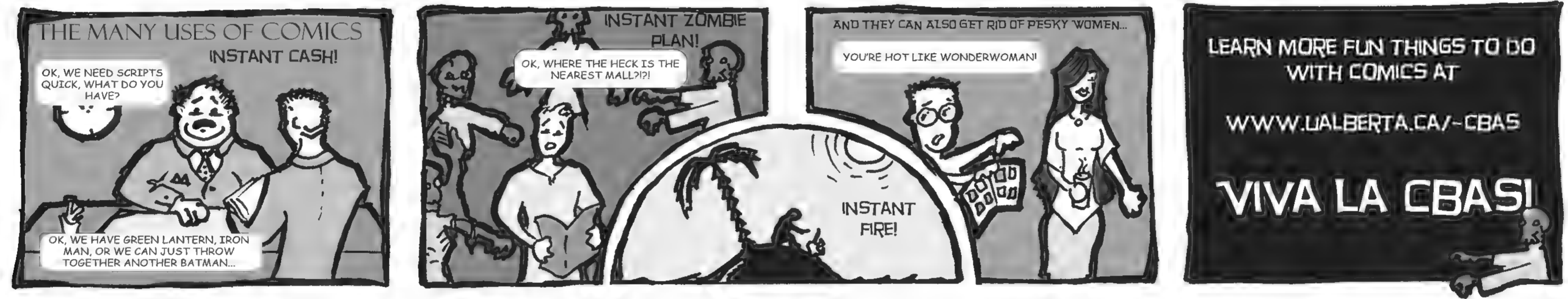
CIRQUE DE GATEWEAUX by Kelsey Tanasiuk



STICKMAN by Jonn Gagnon



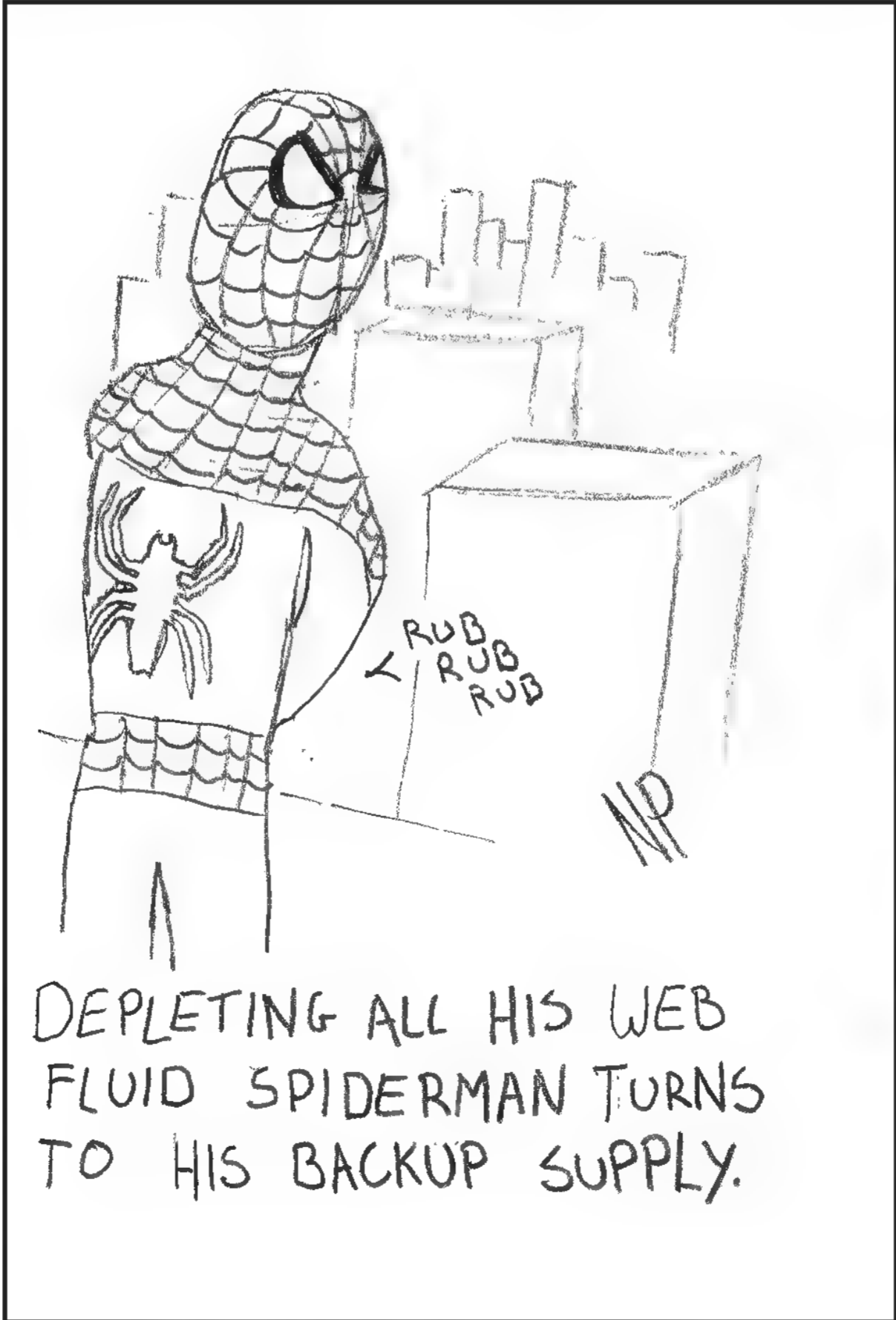
COMIC JAM by Matt Lui and the Comic Book Appreciation Society



ID & EGO by Lauren Alston



CHRONO-RAPE by Nathan Plumb



GREENISH GRAY-MATTER by Lee Satveit



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# STIs on the march in Alberta

Despite increased access to sexual health education, infections such as gonorrhea and syphilis continue to be prevalent in the Capital Health region

VICTOR VARGAS  
Online Coordinator

The Capital Health region is experiencing outbreaks of several Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), most notably gonorrhea and syphilis.

According to Dr Ameeta Singh, an infectious disease assistant professor at the University of Alberta, the region is experiencing an increase in STIs even when condoms and STI tests are readily available because people have simply become complacent.

“In order for condoms to work, of course, they have to be used,” she said. “And our suspicion is that they are not being used. People are bored about hearing about condoms and the need to protect themselves.”

Dr Singh noted that in 2005, there were 175 newly diagnosed cases of HIV in the province, while in 2006 there were 218, with a quarter of the new cases being people under the age of 29. However, Singh said that the real change is how the HIV infection is being spread.

“If we look at the breakdown of the cases, until four years ago, about 40 per cent [of] most new HIV infections were from injection drug use. But in the last four years, about 80 per cent of the new infections were sexually trans-

mitted,” Singh explained. “So we have seen a very significant rise in the transmission of HIV. This is directly linked to what is happening with other STIs.”

**“It shows that people aren’t using protection when they are engaging in intercourse, which shows that people aren’t scared.”**

**SAMANTHA STASIUK**  
STUDENTS’ INTERNATIONAL HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION CO-CHAIR

Samantha Stasiuk, co-chair of the Students’ International Health Association, believes it’s because our generation is no longer worried about STIs. With misconceptions about them circulating and so many treatments available, Stasiuk said that it’s causing people to become naïve about the issue.

“It shows that people aren’t using protection when they are engaging in intercourse, which shows that people aren’t scared,” Stasiuk explained.

“They think that all STIs are treatable, and they’re not. You can treat the bacterial ones, but you can never get rid of the viral ones. And you never know when you’re infected. Lots of people can live for years with HIV and not know.”

She speculated that the reason people aren’t concerned with STIs is because the upcoming generations did not live through events such as the 80s AIDS scare, where contracting HIV would have been a death sentence.

“Currently it’s [HIV], a chronic and manageable syndrome that people have, and there are so many medications out there, people think they are secure when they are not.”

Singh advised that in addition to condoms, people should take regular STI tests, noting that at the health clinic, the tests are free, as is the medication for treatment. But he warned that attempting to deduce if a person has an STI by the way they look or by using a blood test isn’t enough.

“All blood donated is routinely tested for HIV and syphilis, but it is not tested for anything else. So in order to be tested [for], for example, gonorrhea or chlamydia, you’d need a urine specimen,” Singh said.

## CAMPUS CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Cody Civiero and Natalie Climenhaga

### REAR WINDOW

On 13 November, there was a theft from a vehicle parked on the west side of Mackenzie Hall. CSS received a call advising them that the vehicle had been broken into and the rear window smashed out. CSS attended and took a photo and witness statement. A face plate and CD deck were missing from the vehicle. The suspect is an unidentified male.

### POT-BELLIED PERV

On 13 November at about 5:30pm, it was reported that a male followed a female student from the fifth-floor Centre Wing of the Biological Sciences building towards the elevator. The complainant pushed the button as the male waited by the stairwell. The elevator came to the floor and the male walked towards it, but noticed others were on the elevator and instead proceeded towards the Zoology wing. The suspect is described as Caucasian, 5’8”, heavy-set, pot-bellied, 20-30 years old, with a brown beard, brown hair, and wearing dark clothes. The area was searched, but the male was not located.

### FOR WHOM THE DELL STOLED?

At about 9:30am on 22 November, a student came into the CSS office to report that his laptop and accessories valued at approximately \$2000 had been stolen between 12:45pm-18:30pm the day before from the student study lounge in the Medical Sciences Building (MSB). The laptop is described as a black and silver Dell XPS M1210 with the serial number 3F2KMB1. Anyone with information on why someone would steal a computer that runs Windows is asked to call Campus Security.

### LISTER LOUT

On 16 November at around midnight, an extremely intoxicated male was at seen

at the front doors of Lister Hall. He had attempted to enter a few times, and the cabs waiting outside wouldn’t take him. CSS attended the area and recognized the male as having been previously escorted off campus. The individual was identified, and it was determined that he had several outstanding criminal warrants for his arrest. He was then arrested, and became combative with the officers. Finally, he was released into the custody of the EPS, and was also charged with trespassing.

### THANKS FOR THE UPDATE

On 16 November at 11pm, a male attended the HUB Mall beat office to check in with the officer. He reported that he was “going to be good today.” He had apparently spoken with CSS about ten years earlier.

### HIT THE SHOWERS

On 22 November at 3:30pm, wallets, phones, and watches were stolen from the Clare Drake Arena change room. As one of the victims was in the process of cancelling his credit card, bank officials noticed it was being used at a store just off campus. The locker-room thief is described as a 20-year-old male with light complexion and short brown hair. He was last seen wearing a dark ball cap and a dark long sleeve shirt. CSS and EPS are investigating.

### VENTING THEIR FRUSTRATIONS

On 25 November just after 1pm, two males were observed entering a construction area between the Heritage Medical Research Centre and the Medical Sciences building. After speaking with them, officers learned that the men had spent the night in the construction area near a heat vent. Both homeless men were warned against entering a secure area, before being escorted off campus.

### FARE THEE WELL

On 25 November at 9:20am, a male was caught sleeping in a HUB Mall stairwell. Officers attended the area and identified the male as having no University affiliation and an extensive criminal record related to weapons. He received a warn-

ing and was directed off campus.

### EARTH TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

On 25 November at about 2:30am, a fire alarm went off in International House after a fourth-floor smoke detector was activated. CSS attended the area, and fire trucks arrived a short time later. The smoke was cleared by the fire department, and the alarm was silenced after it was determined that the smoke had been caused by a naïve resident who had attempted to microwave an item wrapped in tin foil. The disgruntled and sleepy residents were then allowed to escape from the frigid cold and re-enter. There was no damage, other than to the microwave.

### SUBZERO

On 25 November at midnight, officers located a male laying unconscious on a couch in SUB. CSS tried to wake the man; however, after getting no response, an ambulance was called to the scene and the snoozer was taken to the hospital. He has no University affiliation, and alcohol appears to have been a factor.

### REDA-LRT

LRT security called in CSS after spotting an intoxicated and belligerent individual on 112 Street. Officers arrived on scene at the same time the male was being arrested by LRT Peace Officers. The male was identified as a current student, issued a public intoxication summons by LRT Peace Officers, and escorted back to his residence.

### STEALING CANDY A BIG MAYBE

On 23 November just after 1pm, it was reported that a group of approximately four males were attempting to throw a candy machine out of the elevator on the 3rd floor of SUB. Officers attended the area and located a small, lightly damaged M&M candy machine inside the elevator that was believed to have been stolen from RATT. The Nerd burglars were last seen heading in the direction of the Clare Drake Arena. Campus Security identified a group of males fitting the profile of the sweet-toothed thieves; however, it was determined that they were unrelated to the theft. If you have any information, please contact Campus Security.

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» MONDAY, DEC. 3RD @ 8:30PM  
oilers vs. kings  
tickets given away to wednesday's game

» WEDNESDAY, DEC. 5TH @ 7:00PM  
oilers vs. penguins  
tickets given away to friday's (dec 7th game)

JOIN US AT RATT FOR YOUR LAST DAY OF CLASSES!

wednesday, december 5th

MONDAYS – FOOTBALL FOLLOWED BY GUITAR HERO!

Jager Bombs-Rock Star & Jagermeister-on special

TUESDAYS – DUB THAT DITTY!

the fun starts at 9 p.m.  
Molson Canadian on Special

WEDNESDAYS – KARAOKE

With your hosts Colin and Ed!  
Kokanee and Kokanee Gold on Special

FRIDAYS taking requests for any tunes that make you wanna dance!

HOURS  
monday-friday | saturday  
11AM-2AM | 3PM-2AM

## Bill needs more consultation time—Orr

Heated debate preceded the bill's passing; however, in the end, a majority of councillors voted to move forward with the development of an opt-out system

DFU • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

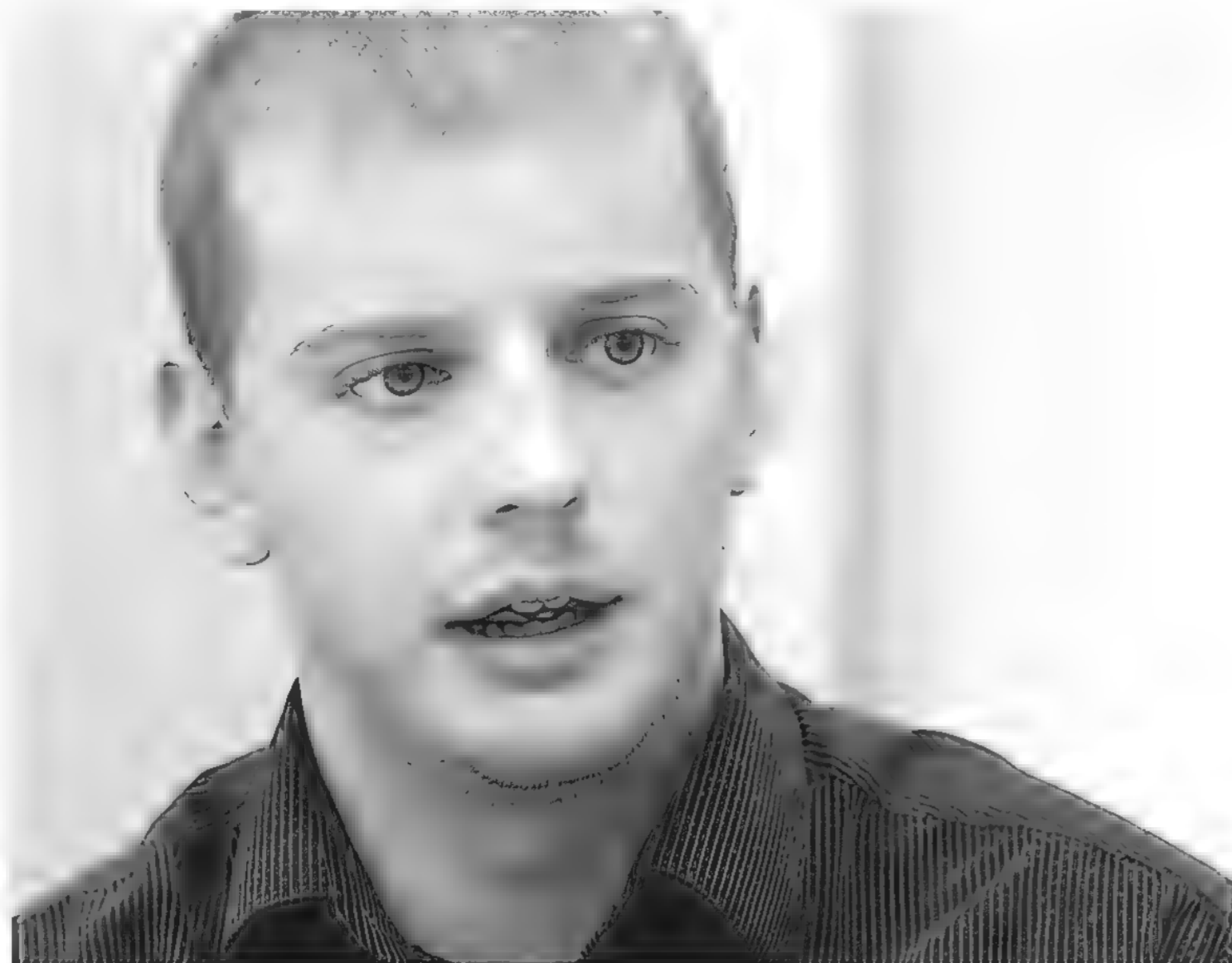
Others in the SU don't necessarily agree with this sentiment. As Vice-President (Operations & Finance) Eamonn Gamble explained, there will be ample time for consultation on the matter in the future.

"I do believe that consultation, especially with something that's probably going to be controversial, is a good thing," Gamble stated. "That being said, what Council debated last Tuesday was a principle. That's what first readings of these bylaw changes are; they're read as principles to see if Council in general agrees with the idea. The rest of the main concerns from these DFUs were implementation concerns, which can be dealt with later."

However, a more serious concern from APIRG revolves around the very operation of their organization.

As Orr explained, because APIRG is a not-for-profit society, it must abide by the rules of the Alberta Societies Act. One of the stipulations of the act is that they must maintain an active membership list. Due to freedom of information issues, the SU has never released this list to APIRG. To circumvent this, the organization has instead kept a list of individuals who have opted out, and students who come in and aren't on this list are considered members. If the opt-out is centralized, there are fears that neither an opted-in or opted-out list will ever reach APIRG, taking away its ability to register as a society.

Still, Gamble affirmed that this shouldn't be a problem with a



MIKE OTTO

**THE DFU DILEMMA** Eamonn Gamble discusses the SU's position on Bill 6.

centralized system.

"I think this is very easily remedied in that we just give them the list after people have opted out," he explained. "We'll keep the opportunity to opt out confined to a short period of time."

But Orr feels that more discussion of the bill and a well-thought out plan is necessary for Bill 6 to be of benefit to students and DFUs alike.

"I don't think that Council was ill-intentioned in this, and in no way would APIRG want to be portrayed as not wanting an opt-out to be accessible or trying to hide over in the corner someplace and just collect the money and not be accountable," Orr stated. "The spirit of the motion isn't necessarily where it's

going to go, ultimately."

Failure to amend the wording of Bill 6 means that Class-C DFUs would also be affected, allowing students in the School of Business and Faculty of Engineering to use the centralized system to opt out of their specific Faculty Membership Fees. As of press time, neither the Business Students' Association or the Engineering Students' Society could be reached for comment.

Following its initial passing, Bill 6 moved on to the Bylaw Committee, where it will be assigned a draftsman. A second reading will take place at a Students' Council meeting in January.

## Students with disabilities receive new info on PSE

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA  
Senior News Editor

When Stephanie Carvalho finished high school, she had little idea of how not to let her visual impairment hold her back from pursuing further education.

She explained that at the time, she took it upon herself to learn more about the technology and mobility options that would allow her to succeed as a postsecondary student.

"My school counsellor didn't know anything," said Carvalho, who is now in her third year of sociology and women's studies. "I had to take a year off because if I came here, it would have been a huge shock to my system."

However, with the recent creation of the *Transition Planning Guide*, the Government of Alberta wants to ensure that high-school students with disabilities don't have as many unanswered questions as Carvalho faced.

The three-part comprehensive guide, put together by the Ministry of Education, provides students and parents with information ranging from funding logistics to success stories designed to motivate students with disabilities.

Jean Jackson, alternate format delivery manager at the U of A Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS), explained that while the guide is intended for current high-school students, it may help prospective U of A students be better prepared for their transition.

"Hopefully [...] they won't be having

to take a year off to find out, 'How do I do this; what do I do; who do I talk to; what about funding,' and all these kinds of things. Hopefully that will cut down on that lag time," she said.

Jackson explained that the guide will likely be most valuable to students living in remote areas of the province.

"I think this will be really useful out of the city area. Stephanie is local, and she got no information—so you can imagine what it's like if we get out into northern Alberta or in the extreme south of Alberta," she said, adding that the U of A also produces guides for students who have been admitted to the institution.

However, Jackson doesn't suspect this will produce a drastic increase in the number of U of A applicants with disabilities, which she said has been steadily climbing since she first came to campus in 1999.

"I think [the transition guide is] going to catch those people who were maybe slipping through the cracks before. People who just figured, 'I can't do it,'" she said, adding that, generally, students with visual impairments or mobility issues may not feel unsuited for postsecondary life.

"The student who is blind doesn't necessarily feel that they can't come; they just know that they can't see everything, but they're doing okay in school," she said. "Students with learning disabilities may have got the impression that they can't do it, and so this is really good information for them."

# character

is higher than  
intellect...  
a great soul  
will be strong

to live,  
as well  
as think.



## SU AWARDS

Each year, the Students' Union recognizes students who have made contributions to the campus and/or community. If you have helped better your campus or community you could be eligible for up to \$1500 from an SU award.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR AN APPLICATION, VISIT [WWW.SU.UALBERTA.CA/AWARDS](http://WWW.SU.UALBERTA.CA/AWARDS). APPLICATIONS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT ALL INFOLINK DESKS, FACULTY OFFICES, INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, AND 2-900 SUB. APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED IN 2-900 SUB BY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH 2008 AT 5PM.

For further information contact 492-4241 or [ea@su.ualberta.ca](mailto:ea@su.ualberta.ca)

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

# Obesity pills no magic bullet—prof

General internal medicine professor Dr Rajdeep Padwal warns that many diet pills currently on the market are either ineffective, untested, or unsafe

CORY TOKAY  
News Writer

According to Dr Rajdeep Padwal of the University of Alberta, the majority of over-the-counter weight loss products seldom, if ever, work, and focus exclusively on weight while ignoring other health issues.

Currently, Padwal said, 40–60 per cent of Canada's population is overweight or obese, and while there may be several products on the market offering weight loss solutions, he urges people to avoid the majority of these products and just try to make healthy lifestyle choices.

"The over-the-counter [...] sort of stuff you see, either it has no science behind it, or the science shows it doesn't work, or the medication may be potentially harmful," Padwal explained.

Padwal said many individuals that take over-the-counter or commercial weight loss products expect total weight loss of 30–40 per cent of their initial weight. However, such drastic weight loss is difficult to achieve, and Padwal said that few individuals are able to do so.

He also made an important distinction between over-the-counter weight loss products and medically prescribed anti-obesity drugs.

"In medical circles, the term 'anti-obesity drugs' is generally used to refer to prescription medications used in the treatment of obesity, and [their] goal is a little different" from that of weight loss products, he said. "It's to cause people to lose weight, no question, but also help them to improve their medical problems and their quality of life.

"And that's a bit different from a weight loss supplement, which is often exclusively advertised to people



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: RYAN SHIPPELT

**THINNING THE RANKS** Readily available diet drugs might not be a solution.

specifically focusing on just weight, weight, weight, and they don't talk much about other medical problems getting better," he explained.

Padwal noted that many over-the-counter products undergo no scientific testing, and those that do are often shown to be ineffective. He also said that there are products on the market that have some evidence of working but which are still harmful to the user.

In Canada there are only two medically tested anti-obesity drugs available: Xenical, which prevents fat from being absorbed into the body encouraging the user to eat less fat, and Meridia, which helps the patient

to feel fuller so that they have less of a desire to eat.

But as Padwal pointed out, neither of these products is available without a prescription, and neither has any affect on weight loss—they only help to avoid further weight gain.

However, despite the lack of evidence to support their use, Padwal said weight loss products continue to promise unrealistic results to their users.

"I heard one ad on the radio the other day [...] that this stuff will help you to lose 20 pounds, 30 pounds over a week or two, and that simply just doesn't really happen," Padwal said.

## Study: classifying sex offenders with intellectual disabilities problematic

CAROLINE LEE  
News Writer

According to a team of North American researchers, including some from the University of Alberta, sex offenders with impaired learning who publicly engage in sexually inappropriate behaviour appear to have less sexual knowledge than individuals without intellectual disabilities that have committed more serious offences.

The study, published in June 2007 issue of *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, gives supporting evidence that the debated "counterfeit deviance" hypothesis holds true for a certain group of sex offenders.

"Counterfeit deviance theory suggests that some people with intellectual disabilities commit what looks like a sexual offence, but it really has to do with their lack of knowledge about what would be appropriate to do sexually and also just a lack of knowledge of sex in general," explained Dr Yona Lunsky, the lead researcher for the study and a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto.

Even though sex offenders with intellectual disabilities were more likely to have undergone sexual education programs, the study found

by comparing offenders to a similar group of non-offenders with comparable disabilities that the two groups had almost identical levels of sexual knowledge.

"A person with [an intellectual disability] may have no sense of social norms—[of] what's appropriate or what's not appropriate to do. They don't belong in jail," she said.

**"A person with [an intellectual disability] may have no sense of social norms—[of] what's appropriate or what's not appropriate to do. They don't belong in jail."**

DR YONA LUNSKY  
U OF T PSYCHOLOGY PROF

Instead, Lunsky believes that these individuals might benefit more from sex education that's tailored to their intellectual capacity by assessing their knowledge and attitudes towards sexuality. Through such interventions, the offenders would be able to guide their behaviour in public by learning

what's socially acceptable.

"If you're working with someone who has a more severe disability, and their sexual offence was public masturbation, sex education for them might be just teaching them when they are allowed to put their hands in their pants," she explained. "That might be all they need or all they can understand at that point. Really, it's very specific to the needs of the person."

However, Lunsky stressed that it can't be generalized that all sex offenders with intellectual disabilities committed offences due to a lack of knowledge. In some cases, offenders have undergone numerous educational interventions and seem to exhibit a high level of sexual knowledge and understanding of the appropriateness of their offences. Yet, these individuals still continue to display offensive sexual behaviour in public.

"We can't just say across the board [that] if you have an intellectual disability, it's not your fault; you didn't mean it," she said. But we also can't say [that] sex offenders with intellectual disabilities are just like sex offenders without intellectual disabilities, and even with education, they can't control their behaviours and should be incarcerated. It really depends on the person."

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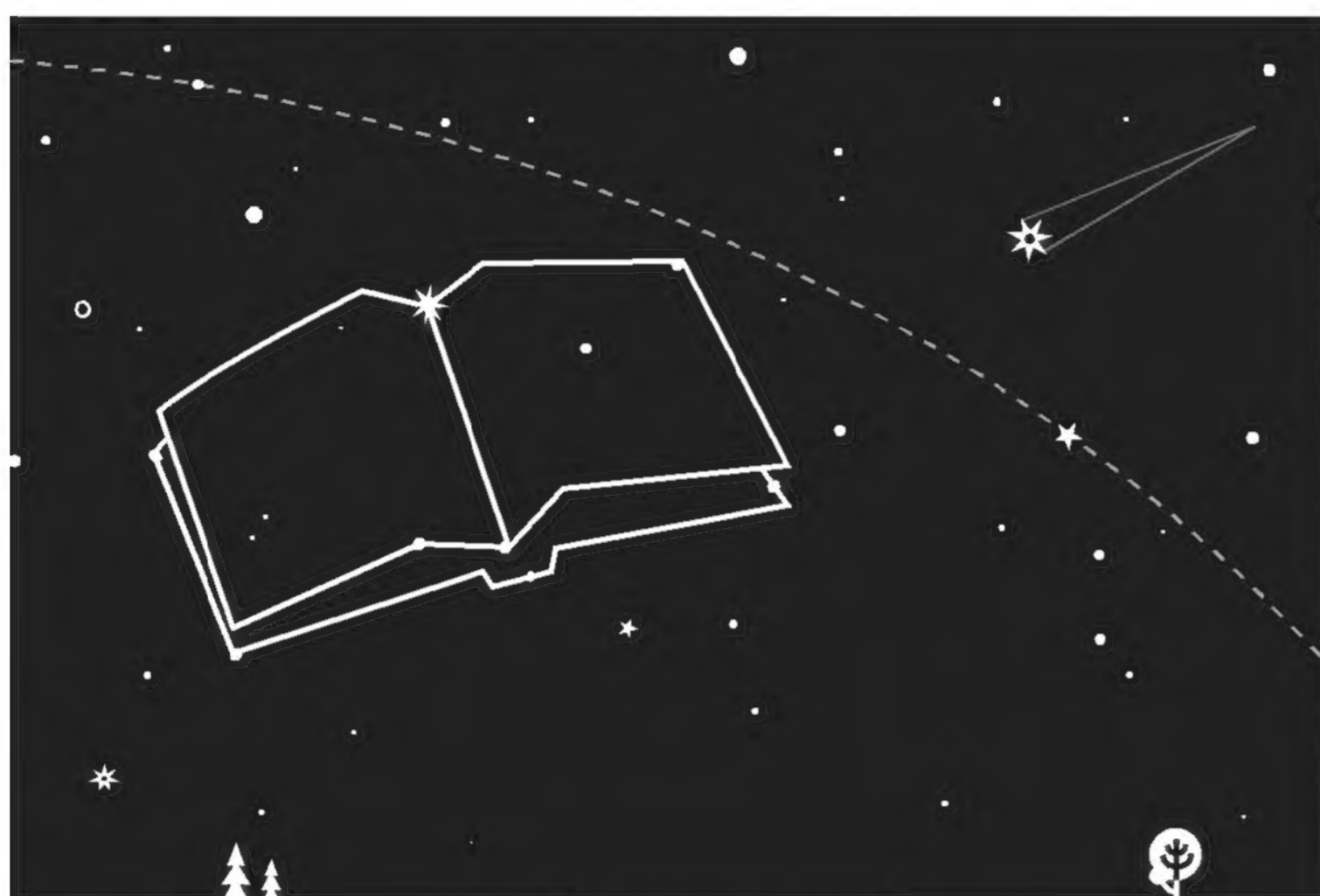
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## PROFESSOR OF THE WEEK



### DR. JOHN OTTO OLSON

AUGUSTANA CHEMISTRY 110

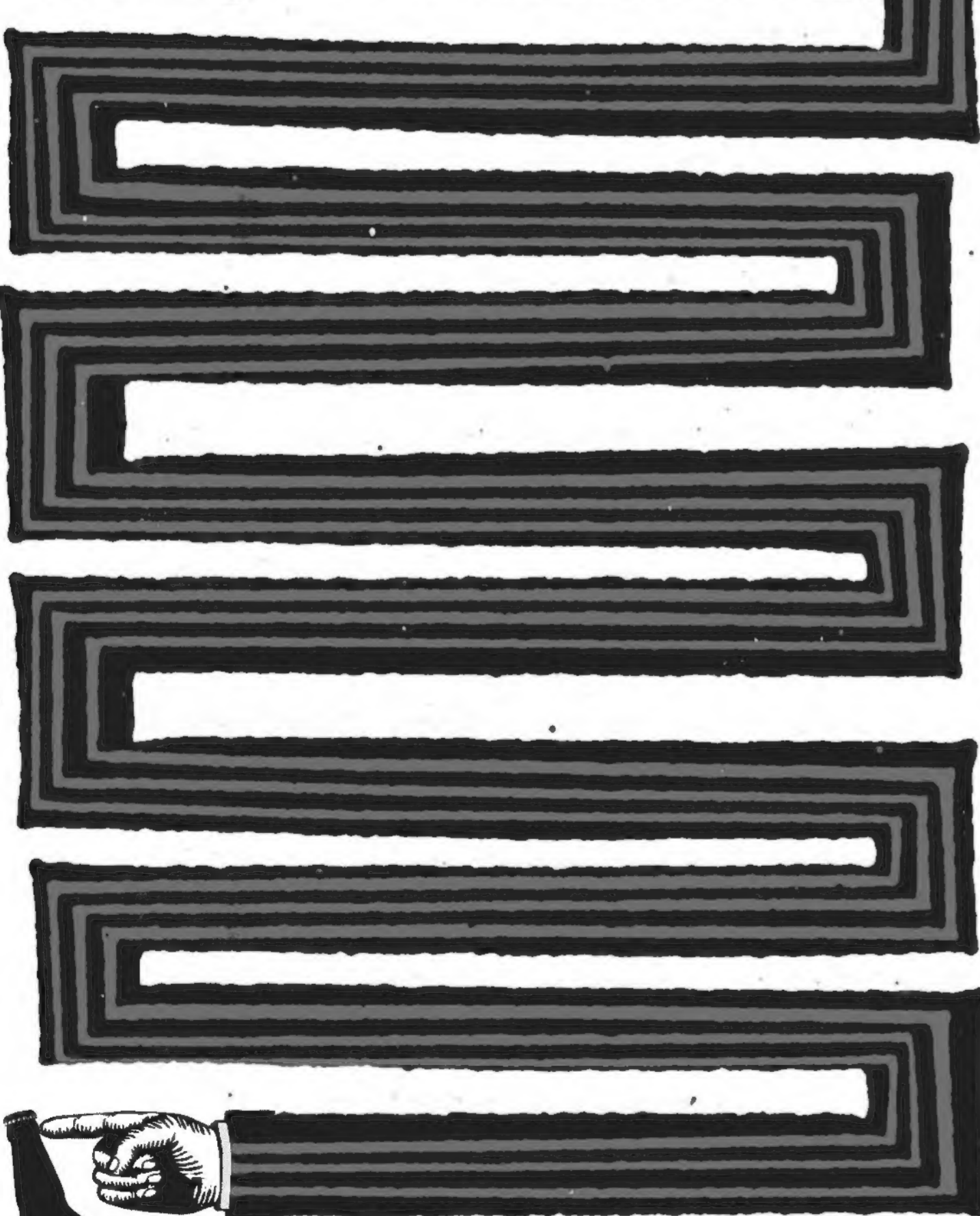
Dr. Olson is a professor that exemplifies the dedication towards teaching that this program, [Professor of the Week], aims to honor. His office is nearly always open; if not, a phone call or weekend/late night meeting is far from uncommon. He presents organic and general chemistry through multiple means of material that are constantly revised and perfected to ease understanding and to present chemistry as an art as much as a science. As one of Augustana's longest-serving professors, he will not only be missed by his students, but the entire faculty when he retires. Dr. Olson deserves to be recognized as an excellent teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend.

Do you have a professor that's unique and shows their value of undergraduate teaching? Nominate them! Email [avpa@su.ualberta.ca](mailto:avpa@su.ualberta.ca).

Nominations can also be picked up and submitted at any Faculty Association or InfoLink desk, or the SU executive offices front desk.



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# Anglophone students holding out from protests in Quebec

MATTHEW FIORENTINO  
The Link (Concordia University)

MONTREAL (CUP)—“À qui la rue? À nous la rue!” shouted over 2000 students as they marched from Dorchester Square with painted picket signs and street-wide banners into the heart of Montreal on 15 November.

Their mission was clear—free education—and aside from the downpour that day, everything seemed to be in order. That is, until someone remarked, “Where are the Anglophones?”

A special general assembly at McGill, while still attracting 600 students, failed to bring in enough undergraduates to vote on a proposed strike. Similarly, Concordia's general assembly, held on 29 October, fell short of quorum by over 600 students.

While many anglophone students are still attending protests, their numbers are dwarfed by those of the francophone population.

“McGill was represented by about 200 students at Thursday's protest,” Max Silverman, Vice-President of External Affairs for the Student Society of McGill University said. “I believe there were roughly 250 Concordia students on hand as well.”

“Of course there is always an Anglo presence at these events, but we're a minority,” Erika Dyer, a Dawson College student said.

To date, Dawson College is the only English-speaking institution in the province whose student body voted in favour of officially supporting the Quebec-wide student strike against the lifting of a 13-year tuition freeze.

However, only a small but consistent

number of protesters have appeared at Dawson's de Maisonneuve and Atwater entrances, urging students not to cross their picket lines. Their requests largely went ignored as most hurried off to classes, which continued uninterrupted.

**“If you look at McGill, half of the students hail from outside of the province. There's no student movement in the States or the rest of Canada that really compares with the activist culture that we have in Quebec.”**

MAX SILVERMAN  
MCGILL UNIVERSITY STUDENT SOCIETY

“People at Dawson are terribly apathetic to an array of political issues,” Dyer said. “A lot of students are really against the free education movement, and I have trouble understanding that.”

“I think if you look at Concordia and McGill, historically speaking, we've always been kind of behind in terms of jumping on board,” Silverman said. “If you look at McGill, half of the students hail from outside of the province. There's no student movement in the States or the rest of Canada that really compares with the activist culture that we have in Quebec.”

Students from outside of Quebec

already pay several thousand dollars more in tuition fees than students native to the province.

Still, a key rallying point for francophone students has been the Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) administration's decision to offset their \$350 million debt by raising tuition fees, cutting back expenses, and revising which programs receive funding.

Renaud Lachance, Quebec's auditor general, blamed UQAM's poor finances on a pair of construction projects that ran over budget before completion.

“Students at UQAM are going to see the offerings of the University and the quality of teaching diminish because of the school's financial situation, which is not their fault to begin with,” said Jean-Olivier Lancot David, a Université de Montréal student who took part in the protest.

“At UQAM, I think the movement has been so successful because of the urgency of the issues,” Silverman said.

Some feel that tradition also plays a role in mobilizing students.

“I think we're [as francophones] certainly more used to protesting in the streets at least,” Lancot David said. “There's no doubt that if you look at recent history, French-speaking Québécois have been more prone to mass mobilization.”

“Yes, there is a disparity,” Silverman admitted. “But I can also say that the francophone students were pleased to see Concordia and McGill represented at the protest on Thursday.”

“If nothing else, this movement's victory will be bringing Anglo and Franco students together.”

## Campus bars get creative to stay afloat

With grade 13 a thing of the past, campus watering holes are suffering—and the majority of first-year undergrads at Ontario universities are underage

LAURA DI MASCIO  
GEOFF IVES  
The Charlatan (Carleton University)

OTTAWA (CUP)—Campus bars across Canada are either closing down or expanding their services as it becomes more difficult to attract students.

Jeff Dockeray, executive director of the Campus Hospitality Managers Association, a national association of campus pub, restaurant, and night-club managers, said he sees “a natural progression away from alcohol into a more diverse set of facilities.

“Campus profits from their alcohol operations and their food operations have dropped significantly the last ten years,” he said.

Dockeray also blames higher prices for the downturn.

“Gradually, over the last 20 years, sure, there's been a reduction in at least the availability of profit because of the escalation of alcohol and food costs—primarily alcohol.”

Ontario has also been hurt because of the double cohort year since, for the first time in the province's history, first-year students are now generally unable to drink legally.

The loss of first-year students also hurts campus bars because it was mostly first-year students who were attracted to the campus pub scene, said Fran Wdowczyk, executive

director of the Student Life Education Company, which promotes healthy decision-making among postsecondary and high school students.

“Predominantly, it's your first-year students who would go to the campus bar until they found other places in town where they wanted to go,” she said.

**“We've watched the campus bar evolve from just serving alcohol to starting to serve only bar food at night.”**

FRAN WDOWCZYK  
STUDENT LIFE EDUCATION COMPANY

Changes in the student lifestyle have also carried their toll, said Wdowczyk.

“Students are considerably healthier than they were 20 years ago when it comes to making choices around alcohol,” she explained, noting that surveys have shown students “are not going out two, three, four nights a week. They're maybe going out once or twice in a month.”

The shift has hurt what used to be a real money-maker in the 1980s and 1990s, she said.

According to Dockeray, campus bars have been forced to diversify their revenues in order to break even, introducing food, arcade games, interactive nights, and increased programming.

“We've watched the campus bar evolve from just serving alcohol to starting to serve only bar food at night,” Wdowczyk said.

Now, she added, the campus bar must be “more than just a booze-can.”

“Some of them have become lunchtime restaurants that cater not only to students but to faculty and staff as well, and we even have some campus bars that have a full catering contract.”

Wdowczyk cited Wilf's, the student bar at Wilfrid Laurier University, as a prime example of a campus bar that has re-invented itself to become a restaurant where faculty and staff are happy to go to after work.

Oliver's, Carleton University's campus bar, also offers more than just alcohol. Skantha Sivakadachaiyar, Carleton University Students' Association's Vice-President (Finance), said food sales at Oliver's have gone up recently, and a new breakfast menu was recently added.

“We're not open just for alcohol,” he said. “Our bigger seller is food.”

He said Oliver's also tries to attract students by offering an array of activities, such as Guitar Hero competitions, movie nights, and guest speakers.

## UN should've fixed their stats long ago

IN TIME FOR WORLD AIDS DAY 2007 THIS Saturday, the United Nation's Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS released their latest Epidemic Update, tracking the latest statistics on the progress of the disease around the world. The results surprised a lot of people: the report says that approximately 33.2 million people have either HIV or AIDS, down from the previous estimate of 40 million.

There's rarely any good news on the AIDS front, so it's tempting to be cheered by these new numbers. In reality, though, the story's not nearly so rosy. The lower infection numbers don't mean that 7 million people suddenly got better, or even that fewer people are getting the disease. The reason the figures changed is that they've been getting them wrong for a long time, and only now changed their process to be more accurate. Consequently, one of the most important organizations in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS has suffered a huge blow to its credibility and distracted the public from the real issues of the epidemic.

For years, statisticians and epidemiologists have been criticizing UNAIDS for its methods and statistics. The problem seems mainly to be that, in many countries, they get their numbers by extrapolating infection rates from prenatal clinics in urban areas over large populations. This method tends to lead to overestimation of numbers—in some countries, the difference is as much 20 per cent.

Experts have been hounding UNAIDS to fix their process for years, and that they have only done so now makes them look ineffective and inept. Even if they've finally gotten it right, who's going to trust them?

It also makes it harder to track what progress, if any, we're making against this disease. The main purpose of the kind of information the Epidemic Update is supposed to provide is to let us analyze the progress of the virus and the results of prevention and treatment programs. By dragging their feet on the change of method, UNAIDS made it harder to track what was actually occurring. Though the report claims that rates of infection have leveled off in several high-risk countries, including Kenya and Zimbabwe, it's hard to make concrete evaluations because there's no equivalent data against which to compare the 2007 numbers.

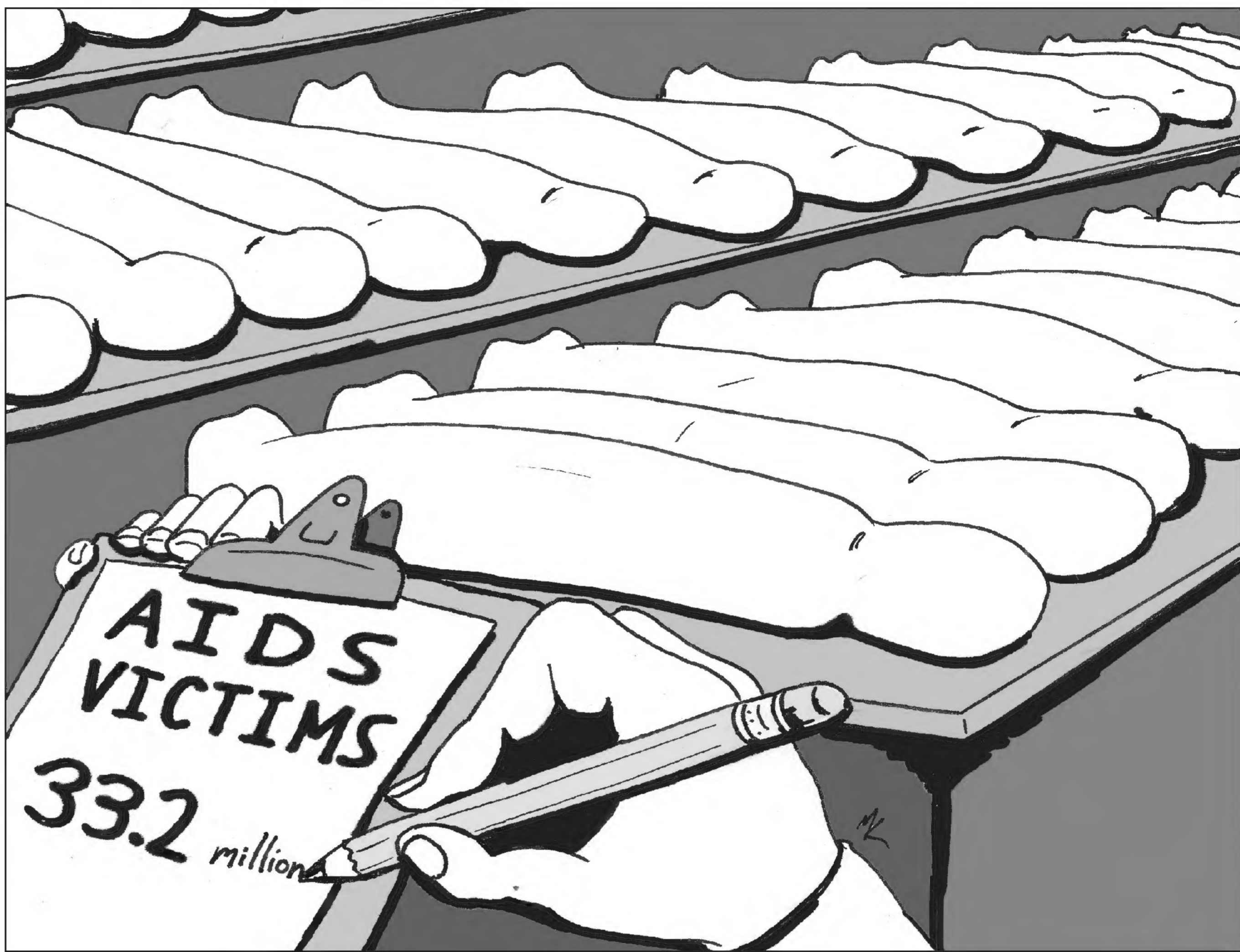
Their blunder also means that instead of media outlets reporting on the dreadful facts of the AIDS epidemic, all that they're focusing on is the apparent decrease in the prevalence of the disease. However, the drop in numbers makes the reality no less horrific than it was before. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, there are 22.5 million people living with AIDS—61 per cent of whom are women—and 11.4 million AIDS orphans. That's 68 per cent of the world's AIDS patients, and the region accounts for 76 per cent of all AIDS deaths.

This is also a stain on the UN's record. They should have been more vigilant in analyzing their methods and results, especially considering that experts have been calling on them to do this for years. That they didn't look into those objections when they first arose makes the UN look lazy at best and, at worst, as if they've been manipulating statistics. They're leaving themselves open to criticism, stating that they intentionally highballed infection numbers to milk extra money for research. It's a ludicrous proposition, but that it's even been uttered goes to show how damaging inaccuracies and bad scholarship could be to the UN's reputation in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

Trying to deal with this global crisis is an enormous and delicate undertaking. From the first discovery of the disease, it's been surrounded by controversy. In many societies—even ours—it's a taboo subject, and its victims are often ostracized. Even how best to prevent further spread of the epidemic is hotly contested. The last thing the fight against AIDS needs is more controversy. By making a mess of their statistical analysis, UNAIDS has just added to the confusion at a time when the fight against the virus needs clarity and straight-forward information.

Instead of being able to celebrate the wonderful news that the prevalence of infection might finally be going down in the world's worst-affected countries, we're left wondering and worrying about the accuracy of the UN's information. The real tragedy is that millions are dying from a disease with no cure; the UN's blunder shouldn't be allowed to distract from that.

ROBIN COLLUM  
Sports Editor



“It looks like the numbers have levelled off this year.”

MIKE KENDRICK

## LETTERS

### Butt out on Beijing butts

I'm writing to you in regards to Miss Kotovych's article on 27 November (re: "China doesn't like big butts, cannot lie"). In her work, Miss Kotovych has expressed her own opinion on whether the prestigious Olympics Committee shall impose certain physical restrictions on female hostess candidates. Personally, I have been offended by her words.

Firstly, if she knew a thing or two about the Nanjing Massacre and the Japanese Army's treatment of "comfort women," then she would've seen that comparing a female physique to a Japanese brand vehicle, Honda, is inappropriate. Also, I believe Miss Kotovych has forgotten that the purpose of hosting such an honourable, internationally recognized event is partly to share in the Chinese culture. Since the Chinese society takes pride in traditional beauty, is it wrong to share it with world—especially North Americans?

Miss Kotovych should consider herself privileged to be living in a country where freedom of speech is an individual's right. However, her article comes off pathetic as she expands two thirds of a column detailing her recent experience in matching up to standards of beauty.

Please do remind Miss Kotovych that the hostess position is no job for "the average Chinese woman." When you have a country with a population comparable to that of China, the chance to be in an internationally recognized event is not an "average" thing to do.

PS: I don't think that the Beijing Olympics Committee will listen to the work of Sir Mix-a-lot, as

the traditional Chinese culture has a little more class than explicitly abusing the woman's physical attributes.

L ZHANG  
Via Email

### Gateway forgot about Joe

(Re: "A history in residence," 27 November). I'm curious as to why Mr Vargas overlooked one of the campus residences. Especially the residence that has won the past 20 intramural cups, that serves as the Catholic ministry for the University, the only residence with a still-functional house committee, and that is nearly as old as the University itself.

Saint Joseph's College is at the center of campus, it's the home of the Rangers, it has long-standing tradition, and it most certainly has a lot of character. It's beyond me that you can mention residences that few have heard of and ignore a residence that is known around campus. The next time you cross the bus loop, take a look our way. Joe's may be a dinosaur, but we sure aren't extinct.

NICK STADNYK  
Arts I

Letters to the editor should be sent to [letters@gateway.ualberta.ca](mailto:letters@gateway.ualberta.ca) (no attachments, please).

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libelous, or otherwise hateful in nature. The Gateway also reserves the right to publish letters online.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author's name, program, year of study and student ID number to be considered for publication.

## LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Sexism not that big an issue in this day and age

Why is it that only arts students have time to write long-winded letters on a non-issue such as sexism on campus? And why is it that this is the only subject about which letters are printed and editorials are written?

Perhaps the five people who are so concerned about this could get together and discuss the issue over tea. Meanwhile, the Gateway might focus some attention on some of the real problems facing students at the U of A. The very visible degradation of the quality of education on this campus over the last few years is an example.

ALEX VANZELLA  
20 November, 1990

*Editor's Note: The following letters from March of 1995 follow the opening of a store in HUB mall that purchased class notes from students for \$25.*

### I can sell notes if I want to; I can leave my profs behind

I'm writing about the protest staged in HUB Mall on 20 March, 1995 by a group of professors. I, like most people that morning, was interested in the commotion at the Vantage Notes store. When I refused to read the protesters' propaganda, I was told that I was a "silly young girl" and was threatened with having my picture taken.

I believe in the right to express a viewpoint publicly and in a rational manner, but I don't have to put up with abusive and harassing behaviour. The note service is great for students, and I don't mind selling my notes. Why shouldn't I make some money on my hard work? After all, I paid my tuition—which last time I checked, didn't pay for the teaching staff to insult students at large.

JUDITH ALTAREJOS  
21 March, 1995

### Note sales gives away all my teaching secrets

Open letter to profs regarding "Note sales draw fire," 21 March, 1995:

I'm convinced that the issue of selling notes in HUB presents the most serious challenge to academic freedom that the University has faced in over ten years.

You all know examples are used in class which aren't intended for simply anyone to hear—from Ralph Klein to your parents or children. Serious questioning of issues in the liberal arts requires the sanctity and trust of the classroom. No one says exactly the same thing to everyone (mom, grandma, priest, best friend, etc).

I am asking you to help us defend our ability to use shocking examples and striking illustrations.

I believe that this issue is at least as important to us in Arts as the issue of tenure. I ask for your support.

HEIDI STRUDER  
23 March, 1995

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: MIKE OTTO

**THE STENCH OF FREEDOM** Sure it might be cold outside, but damn it if you're wearing any pants over the winter break.

# How to extract all possible life out of your holiday downtime

PAUL  
KNOECHEL



**"Try going nocturnal for a while. It makes it easy to avoid the people you don't like, and you can enjoy a myriad of infomercials with the unemployable and angry loners of the world. Besides, nothing memorable happens during the day, and vitamin D is just a crutch for people not bad ass enough to deal with rickets."**

It's almost here: just past the ridge of term papers and through the nightmarish tunnel of exams is the sweet pasture of academic freedom. That's right, winter break is coming, and with it, a full three weeks of no school, no assignments, no professors, and no cafeteria food rotting your body from the inside out. So you're going to need to celebrate and make the most of this opportunity provided for you. And as a service to you all, I'm going to humbly suggest things for you to do to ensure that this break isn't wasted.

First, watch TV and play video games until your eyeballs begin to bleed. You're a camel that just made its way through the desert to an oasis, and before venturing back into the shimmering sand, you must fill your hump with the allegorical water. People will say that you're escaping reality, that you're not doing anything meaningful with your life, and that you're developing bedsores; and then there will be the people that don't approve of this choice. Stay strong and enjoy.

Try going nocturnal for a while. It makes it easy to avoid the people you don't like, and you can enjoy a myriad of infomercials with the unemployable and angry loners of the world. Besides, nothing memorable happens

during the day, and vitamin D is just a crutch for people not bad ass enough to deal with rickets.

Flirt shamelessly with alcoholism. See how far you can take it before you start crossing that fine line into addiction. Always challenge yourself by flirting with that boundry like it's a cute girl with a crazy dad. If someone tells you only alcoholics have a beer within half an hour of waking up, have an Irish coffee. When told that alcoholics drink alone, keep Jesus in your heart, and you'll never be alone. The point is, you don't have anything to study for, so find out where exactly the line is for you so you can avoid it come winter semester. And if someone blathers on about how you're ruining your body, you can quote my favorite 31st-century robot: "bodies are for hookers and fat people." Amen.

Offend some old people. It's getting to the point that university students are forgetting how to act young. There's more than enough time once you graduate to be a professional who's dead on the inside. Until then, grasp on to some immaturity while it's not just sad. And there's no better way to feel young than by offending uppity senior citizens. Nothing makes you feel on top of the world

like streaking through an old folks' home while using curse words to advertise the fact that you're having unprotected, premarital, homosexual sex.

See how long you can go without caffeine. After finals, it's always enjoyable to see how dependent you are on that next cup of joe. Hats off to anyone who breaks my record of five whole hours (I almost got a full night's sleep that time).

And of course, you have to get laid. What's the point of having all this time off if all you do with it is jack it? There's plenty of time for that next semester. Chat up someone all flushed on post-test euphoria, and try a line that would normally have you fishing out your balls from your abdomen. They'll just be riding a wave, and all you have to do is distinguish yourself enough from the crowd to hop on.

Finally, do some good deeds. The advantage is two-fold: for starters, you don't feel bad about hanging out for days at a time in your underpants because you can reference your actions as a good Samaritan; and two, because it's the right fucking thing to do, dummy. Now go donate some blood, and buy your mom a nice Christmas present.

# Iron Rings temper our mettle

Far from simple tradition, this ritual marks the beginning for professional 'geers



GRAHAM  
LETTNER

In the final semester of their degrees, all engineering students in Canada are presented with their very own Iron Ring. It's part of a larger ceremony called the "Ritual of the Calling of an Engineer." Oddly enough, and at roughly the same time, non-engineers seem to perceive a general doubling of hubris and halving of humility on the part of these same engineers.

To the outsider, the Iron Ring might seem like a colossal and exclusive love-in between engineers. But for me, the Iron Ring ceremony was an important transition between this campus and a career. To gauge how widespread this feeling was, I spoke to some of my fellow graduates after the ceremony—first, in the control state of "sober," and then while incrementally increasing the variable "drunkenness." At all levels of sobriety I observed sentiments similar to mine.

Like it or not, university life eventually needs to come to a close. We need to make a transition at the end of our degrees—one in which we finally move on from the world of Wednesday-night benders and wearing the same pair of jeans three (okay, five) days in a row. For engineers, the Iron Ring ceremony connects us to professionals in our field and helps make this transition easier.

Receiving an Iron Ring is important—it means taking on new challenges. There will still be the analytic

rigour we've become accustomed to: churning out weekly assignments, outputting endless lab reports, hacking away for hours in fluorescent computer labs, and generally being "shit-pumped" for the last four years, as one of my peers so eloquently put it. But as an actual engineer, there exist additional challenges—all of which the Iron Ring ceremony helps prepare us for.

**We need to make a transition at the end of our degrees—one in which we finally move on from the world of Wednesday-night benders and wearing the same pair of jeans three (okay, five) days in a row.**

Once you enter the workforce, there becomes a real ethical dimension. Equations and computations merge with people and circumstance—because in the grayscale professional world, ethics can no longer be academically abstracted away. As part of receiving an Iron Ring, each graduating engineer spends the morning before the ceremony studying a set of ethical case studies alongside a practicing professional engineer. This may sound like a dull way to spend a Saturday, but explicitly developing an ethical foundation before entering our profession is key to making a successful post-graduation transition.

Moreover, climbing the ranks from

amateur to professional requires learning the character of professionalism. No, engineers aren't particularly behind in this because of any liquor-induced lack of competence or skill; rather, professionalism is an ethos that raises the bar of expectation. The career engineers at the ceremony take their work seriously, and it shows. They understand that often times a "wrong answer" can cost human lives. Understanding that our work must always uphold the public interest is something these individuals know intuitively. The Iron Ring ceremony helps graduating engineers to begin to understand it as well.

Finally, this ritual makes it clear that it's time for us engineers to shelve any lingering cock-of-the-walk swagger once and for all. Carrying around intellectual chips on our shoulders might be fine for a few cheap laughs around campus, but in the real world, it's fatal. The form and history of the ceremony helps to stress the importance of humility. This rite of passage perfectly captures the transition from carefree university days to the real responsibility of the working world.

Okay, sure, there's the odd engineer who thinks his or her Iron Ring is just a shiny status symbol, an obnoxious table-rapping noise-maker, or a convenient bottle opener. But they're assholes, and have missed out on both the Iron Ring's meaning and their own transition from university to the grown-up world.

For the rest of us, it reminds us of what we've achieved as students, and how little that achievement is compared to what we're asked to become as professional engineers.

And for me, at the end of a long university career, that's a good final lesson.

# Despite its faults, we need the US on top



VICTOR  
VARGAS

Let's review how utterly fucked the Americans are right now. They're massively in debt, their army can't seem to get Iraq under control, their traditional hold over South America seems to have been vaporized, they can't seem to control illegal immigration into their country, and their currency is falling like Gerald Ford. The time of living in a world where the United States is the sole hyper-power may be coming to an end, but forgive me if I'm not celebrating.

Sure, the Americans have done some very stupid and underhanded things over the years, and they've been arrogant jackasses all around, but on the scale of world empires, they actually rank quite low on the evil scale.

People also forget that the Americans have actually done a large amount of good in the world. At the end of WWII, they bankrolled the Marshall Plan, and were one of the chief impetuses in transforming Germany and Japan into functioning and less militarily inclined democracies. During the Cold War, they were actually fairly restrained and reasonable in dealing with their allies, and managed to keep free speech intact. They even tried to make amends

at times for the horrible things they had done—like when Jimmy Carter paid Colombia compensation for the mess created over the Panama Canal.

Of course, people are often so busy shooting their mouths off about America that they seem to forget about historical and even current threats. For example, what if we were to take the worst criticisms about the United States—notably the exaggerated ones—and try to guess what real-world nation most embodies them?

**The fact of the matter is that when the United States leaves the throne, there isn't any one nation that can replace them.**

I'm talking about supporting evil corporations, selling out human rights, large-scale pollution, bullying other nations, and being largely controlled by two seemingly identical parties. If you guessed China, you'd be right.

The fact of the matter is that when the United States leaves the throne, there isn't any one nation that can replace them. The European Union would be a nice successor—that is, if it wasn't a complete pipe dream. While they may have a growing currency and some military weight behind it, thus far they haven't shown a willingness to


do anything to actually intervene in any trouble spots. At most, the EU seems to give nations a stern lecture on why they shouldn't abuse human rights, followed by the strong insistence that some "dire consequences" like an embargo might occur—assuming France or Germany's trade interests aren't at risk. They might talk big, but unless they actually take some action on issues, no one will ever take them seriously.

As for other potential successors to the Americans, none of them seem to be willing or able to command global politics. India is too embroiled in its own internal problems as well as a standoff with a now-destabilized Pakistan. China seems only concerned with securing the resources needed to fuel its regional empire, while Russia is too obsessed with reasserting the old Soviet Empire to actually care about global issues that don't directly affect it. The result is that in a time when we are faced with threats like global warming and we need one nation to take charge, no one is going to be able to do it.

Yes, the Americans are to blame for their own sorry state. Several of their allies told them that Iraq was going to be a military and political disaster, economists foretold that the debt was going to ruin the economy, and they've been warned more than once about the long-term impact if their trade deficit with China continues. But the truth is that, considering the alternatives, it would be nice if the Americans would stay on top of the heap for a few more decades.



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